THE AMERICAN NOVEL IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Travers Dent on Carman, Jr.

First Copy

Carman, T.D. Jr.

378.744
BO
AM1933
c

Boston University
College of Liberal Arts
Library

THE GIFT OF The Author

378.744
BO
AM1933
c

50230

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

THESIS

THE AMERICAN NOVEL IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

by

Travers Denton Carman, jr.

(A.B., Harvard University, 1931)

Submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts

1933

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
LIBRARY

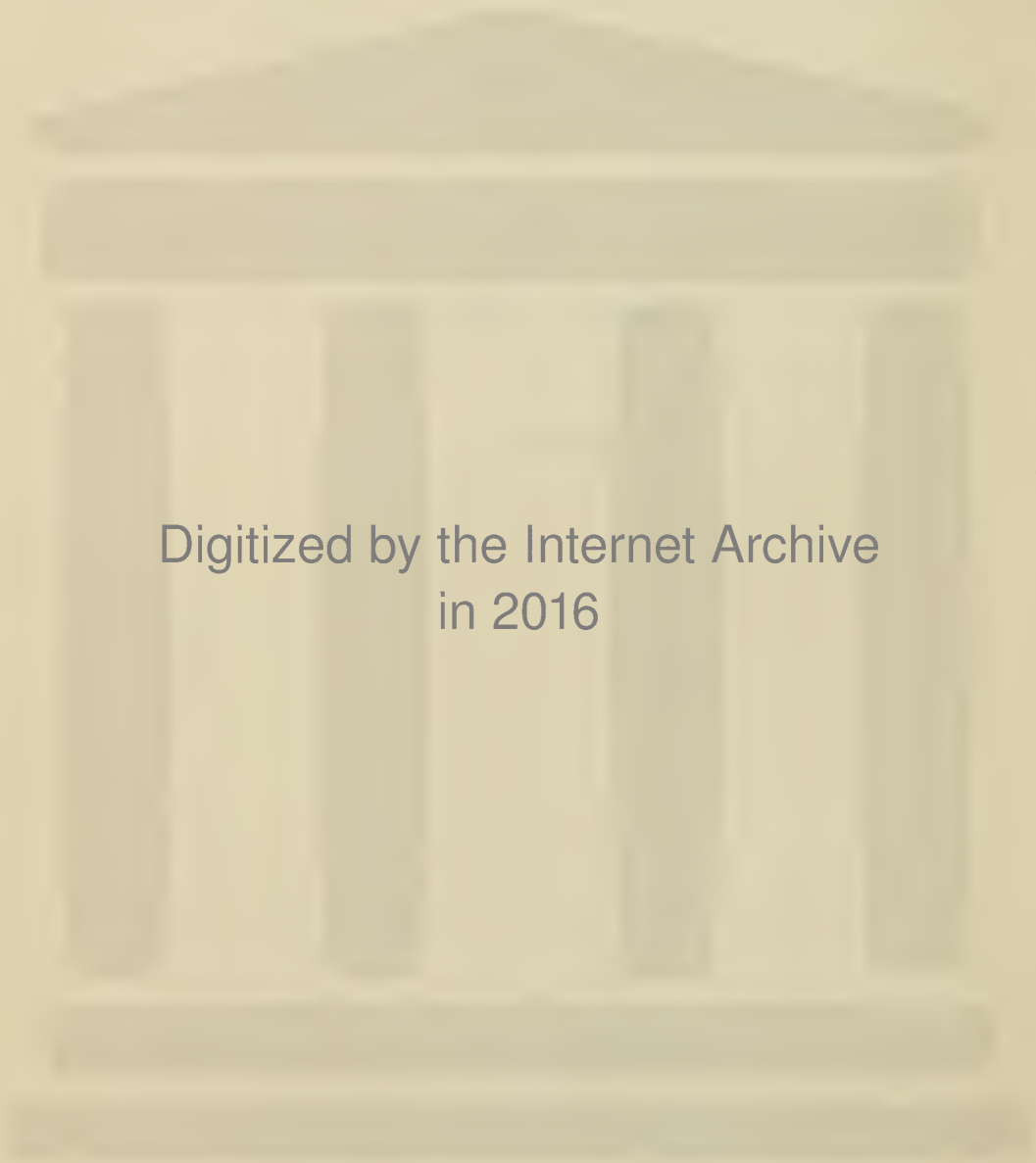
50230

378744
BO
AM 1933
c

PAGE INDEX

IN

OUTLINE


Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016

https://archive.org/details/theamericannovel00carm

I. INTRODUCTION . . I-II

A. Scope
F.L.Pattee on 'modern' period of American Literature . . . I

B. Critical Difficulties . . 2-3
I.) Of Definition 2
2.) Of Critical Confusion 2
3.) Of Contemporary Lack of Perspective 2-3

C. Critical Standard of Thesis 4-6
I.) Content 4-5
Approach to Literary Criticism Proper through Historical Treatment of Changing American Reality 4

Reasons for Peculiar American Development . . 5

The Literary Quest for Truth 5
Two Escapes from Reality 5

2.) Function . . 6
'Synthetic' Criticism

D. Adaquacy of the Novel as an Art-Form and as an Expression of Life . . 6-II

a.) Objections (chiefly Humanistic) 6-I0
I.) Charge of Formlessness 6-8
2.) Charge of Purely Destructive Standards . . 8
3.) Trampling 'Verbal Decorum' Under-foot 8
4.) Photographic Realism 9
5.) "The Cult of Vertigo" 9-I0
6.) "Railing at Idiots" I0
7.) Outer Control I0

b.) Advantages . . II
Framk Norris's Opinion (I903)
R.M.Lovett's Opinion (I93I)

II. HOW THE QUEST BEGINS . . I2-20

A. European Antecedents . . I2-I4
I.) Zola I2-I3
2.) Flaubert I3
3.) The Brothers Goncourt I4
4.) Thomas Hardy I4

D. Domestic Continuation . . I5-20
I.) Hamlin Garland I5
2.) Stephen Crane I6
3.) Frank Norris I6-I9
4.) Lesser Figures I9-20

III. CONCOMITANT QUEST FOR ILLUSION

The Historical Romance (I896-I902) 20-23
Selected List of Titles . 2I

IV. "THE STRENUOUS LIFE" OF "THE MUCKRAKER" (I900-I9I0) 23-32

The Man 23
The Theory 24
'Hard-boiled' 25
'Soft-boiled' 25-26

I.) Jack London 26-27
2.) Upton Sinclair 28-30
3.) David Graham Phillips 30-32
The Problem Novel 30-3I
Content 3I-32

V. VARIATIONS OF THE PROBLEM NOVEL 32-54

Transition of Social Criticism 32-33
I.) Winston Churchill 33-36
Historical Romance 33-34
Political Problems 34
Economic Problems 35
2.) Robert Herrick 36-42
Background 36
"Chimes" 36-39
Philosophy 39-40
Character 40
Underlying Theme 40-4I
His Realism 42
3.) Ernest Poole 42-44
Economics and Ideals 42-43
"The Harbor" 43
"The Destroyer" (I93I) 44
4.) Irwin Edman 44-46
"Richard Kane Looks At Life"
the aim 44-45
fulfillment 45-46
5.) Edith Wharton 46-54
Life 47
The Problem 48-49

5.) Edith Wharton (cont.)
Recurrent Themes 49-51
I.) Divorce 49
2.) Cults 49-50
3.) Money 50
4.) Crudity, Family and Honour 50-51
"Ethan Frome" 51-53
Conclusion 53-54

VI. THROUGH THE WAR TO "THE LOST GENERATION" 54-83

A. Preface . . 54-55

I.) Theodore Dreiser 55-67
The problem of criticism 55
Life 55
Father 56
Mother 56
Philosophy 57-60
Youthful View 57-58
Effect upon Characters 60-61
Dreiser's Innocence 61-62
Sex 62
The Confused Mind 62-63
The Unimaginative and The Untrained . . 63
The Imaginative and The Dreamy . . 64
Mature View 64
Faults . . 65-66
T.K.Whipple's Appraisal 66-67

2.) Sherwood Anderson 68-76
Life 68
Confusion's High Priest 69
Philosophic Primitivism 70
Symbolism 71
Technique 71-73
Vernacular 73
Novels 74-76
Appraisal 75-76

3.) Sinclair Lewis 78-83
The Smart Set 76
Life 76-78
Mr.Lewis 77-78
Philosophy 78-79
The Influence of Journalism 79-83
American Origen 79-80
Journalistic Shortcomings
a.) Interpretation 80
b.) Opportunism 81
c.) Sensationalism 81-83

VII. "THE LOST GENERATION" ITSELF . . 84-103

I.) Characteristic Ideas of "These Sad Young Men" . . . 84-86

A flood of characteristic literature 86-87
"The Limits of Obscenity" 87

2.) Ernest Hemingway . . 87-93
"in our time" 87-88
Sportsmanlike Cruelty and Emotion 88-90
Other Escapes 90-91
"Dirt" 91-93
"The Cult of the Simple" 93-94
A Needless Concern 94-95

3.) William Faulkner 95-97
"Sanctuary" 95
Narrative and Style 96
Vernacular 96-97

4.) F.Scott Fitzgerald 97-98
and Others 98-99

5.) Elizabeth Maddox Roberts 99-103
"The Great Meadow" 99-101
The Roberts Idiom 100
A Recipe for The Historical Novel 102-103

VIII. A NUMBER OF WRITERS AND THEIR WORK

A. "The Escapists" 103-122
I.) James Branch Cabell 104-110
Background 104
Attitude 104-105
Art 106-107
Content 107
Satiric Humour and Cabell Peculiarities 108-109
Branch Cabell 110

2.) Joseph Hergesheimer 111-115
" 14 years" 111-112
Quaker Background 113-114
Historical Method 114-115
Style 115

3.) Willa Cather 116-121
Background 116
Philosophy 116-117
Other Escapes
Art
Marriage and Love 118
The Primitive 119
Too Much Objectivity 119
Central Theme 120
Narrative 120
Characters 120-121
In General 121

B. One Typically American Novelist:
Newton Booth Tarkington . . 122-125

"The Hoosiers" 122
Historical Method 122-123
Further Writing 123
"Alice Adams" 123
"so persistent a reputation" 124
From Mark Twain 125
From W.D.Howells 125

C. Intelligent Optimists 126-160

I.) Ellen Anderson Gholson Glasgow 126-135

Background 126
No Puritan 126
Fate 126
Theme 127-128
Special Interests
i.) The Victorians 128
ii.) The Younger Generation . .129
Purpose 129-130
Other Books 131
Plots and Patterns 131-132
Characters 132
"Responsibilities of the Novelist" . . 132-133
Realism 133
Appeal 133-135
Rhythm 135

2.) Dorothy Canfield (Fisher) 135-140

Her ideas 135-136
Life 136
The Optimist's Platform 137-138
In General 138-139
"Her Son's Wife" 139-140

3.) Zona Gale 141-145

Philosophy 141
"Allotropes" 141-142
Satire 142
Occasional Misfortunes 143
Auctorial Theory 143-144
Work 144-145

4.) Elinor Wylie 145-149
"The Venetian Glass Nephew" 145-147
"The Orphan Angel" 147
"Mr.Hodge and Mr.Hazard" 147
Poetic Prose 148-49

5.) Christopher Darlington Morley 150-156

Familiar Essayist 150
Life,English Influence and Style 150-151
"The Haunted Bookshop"
-"Parnassus on Wheels" . . 151
Urbanity and Morality 152-153
Criticism 153-154
"Where the Blue Begins" 154-155
"Thunder on the Left" 155-156

6.) John Erskine 156-160

The Defense 156-157
First Impression 158
Dialogue 158-159
Characters 159
Americanism 159-160

(a) Thornton Wilder 160-161

IX. LATER DEVELOPMENTS I6I-I67

A. The Proletarians I6I-I65

Edmund Wilson I6I-I62
Class Literature in General I62-I63
The Theory I64
John Dos Passos,or Theory Applied . . I64-I65
The Three Methods . . I65

B. The Younger Humanists I66-I67

X. "The Great American Novelist" I67-I7I
Borderlines of the Novel I68
Philosophy I68
Setting, Characters, and Individualism vs.Democracy I69
The Men and Women I70
Prose Style I70
The Novel of Today and Tomorrow I7I

XI. ANNUAL REVIEW BY TITLES I72-I75

XII. SUMMARY I76-20I

XIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY i-xii

THE AMERICAN NOVEL IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

I. Introduction

(A) Scope

As the title of this study indicates, major interest centers about those writers whose significant work appeared in the present century. They are the writers to be considered in detail; background figures or men of transition like Stephen Crane and Frank Norris receive general treatment in accordance with historical merit.

F.L. Pattee Professor Fred Lewis Pattee regards the entire period thus: his "volume (1) is built upon the general thesis that the thirty or forty years since the 1890 decade constitute a distinct and well-rounded period in American literary history, that literature during this single generation of marvelous change departed so widely from all that had gone before that it stands alone and unique, that the soul of it and the driving power of it were born in the new areas beyond the Alleghenies, and that during its thirty or forty years was produced the greater bulk of those writings that we may call distinctly our own, work peculiarly to be called American literature." His statement conveniently limits the scope of the material at hand; in fact, even the 1890 decade may be disregarded, except as part of the broad nineteenth century background. Whether or no his "marvelous change" extended to literature, and what "we may call distinctly our own," are questions reserved for later discussion. Yet, at least, the dimensions of this study have been here indicated.

(1) Preface Vll, The New American Literature, F.L. Pattee, Century Co. N.Y. 1928

(B) Critical Difficulties:

1. Definition "Most expository studies start out with a definition of their subject. Books about the novel, however, usually begin with an admission that the subject is almost undefinable." (1) If this be so, a treatment of the development of the novel summarized in a fashion to indicate a possible American ideal will be of much more value than a preliminary attempt at what might prove too facile definition.

2. Critical Confusion The particularly confused state of post-war criticism, furthermore, has given no satisfactory body of "materia critica." Consequently it is of especial importance to seek more stable standards than the literary 'free-for-all' has furnished. Few of the books cited in the bibliography possess any solid value. This circumstance, combined with the quality of course material, has led the student to place a large quantity of lecture-course eggs in his critical basket. When placed there, these eggs were in a highly nutritious condition. If, upon now being candled, some appear to have grown 'stale,' and others are found broken, the fault lies in the way they have been kept for the interim.

3. Contemporary Lack of Perspective Contemporary lack of perspective toward the modern American novel makes itself evident in allowing over-emphasis upon the suppressed book. A "Sister Carrie" or a "Jurgen" may draw attention to the respective authors for wholly misleading reasons and render the proportioned view difficult. The publishers' newly-developed craft of 'ballyhoo' and 'blurb'-touting further tends to

Suppression and 'Ballyhoo'

(1) p. 10. Preface to Fiction, Robert M. Lovett. T.S. Rockwell, Chicago 1931

substitute the 'best-seller' or 'book-of-the-month' for the relatively scarce work of merit. Such big-business tactics have made for an over-stimulation of the 'hammock-literature' market and the lowering or abolishing of all but popular standards. Publications like "The Saturday Review of Literature," on the other hand, have done something to check this unholy alliance of advertising and reviewing; they have even sought to raise criticism above mere book-reviewing as practised in America. The situation, then, is perhaps grey but not black.

A Note of Hope is struck

Naturally the contemporary estimate falters in the determination to cast out that which may "date." The vernacular is one aspect of this problem, whilst a quickly-outgrown code of social morality may suggest another stumbling-block. Certainly what seemed a grave error in Margaret Deland's "The Awakening of Helen Ritchie" (1906) strikes the reader of today as a plain absurdity.

Yet despite these difficulties, once a work of art is completed, it must take its place in Professor Woodberry's "temporal series." (1) Therefore, criticism is unavoidable and should be performed as well as possible.

(1) p. 48. Criticism in America; Its Function and Status. Harcourt, Brace. N.Y. 1924. (Essay) "Two Phases of Criticism; Historical and Aesthetic" by George Edward Woodberry.

(C) Critical Standard of Thesis

(1) Content

Historical and Literary Criticism proper

To dwell for a moment upon the obvious, art seeks some sort of imitation of life. During the period under consideration, the model underwent peculiar changes of important philosophic and sociologic implication so that only the historical approach can furnish suitable understanding for literary criticism proper. These two subjects of content had best be amplified together. As for biography, it can take a subsidiary place.

Changing American Reality

The student has found primary interest in the changing American reality since 1900, or more specifically, in the changing literary reflections of this native metamorphosis. To begin with, that over-emphasized disappearance of the frontier in the official year of 1890 unquestionably gave rise to a new and yet age-old problem in civilization: the satisfactory economy of a fully-populated country. Until a people has solved this riddle, it can not be said to have 'come of age' in any valid sort of way. Uncle Sam's twenty-first birthday has, therefore, been erroneously celebrated anywhere from 1776 to 1918; whereas, in truth, it cannot possibly arrive before the varied, contributory evils culminating in October, 1929, have been eradicated. Increasing mechanization, urbanization and world politics have necessitated constant readjustment throughout the years and no literary critic can afford to blink these imposing phenomena any more than he can safely drive the Taine-Turner tandem too hard.

Reasons for Peculiar American Development

Throughout the entire recent American development, tardiness and acuteness have been the most striking characteristics. These features have been explained by the earlier and more gradual rise of industrialization in England and Europe. Moreover, the frontier could absorb disillusion down to the beginning of the present era. When the enormous potentialities of this country were at length utilized, realization of the resultant problems came with an overwhelming suddenness. Consequently our prophets are estimated to be about seventy-five years behind Ruskin and Carlyle in exposing the "criminal fallacies involved in setting material gain above the sanctity of the individual personality." (1)

The Literary Quest

From the literary standpoint, the quest has been for spiritual truth, despite the backwardness of most of our prophets, and the seekers may be seen in hip-boots wading through the materialistic marshland. Many writers sprang (seldom full-grown) from the New West, giving rise to artificially geographic "schools", such as the "Chicago" or "Indiana" variety.

Two Escapes

Harry Hayden Clark points out (2) that American writers have usually sought either the "idyllic" dream escape from reality as did Irving, Poe, Melville, Hergesheimer, Cabell, Cather and Dell, or the "nature paradise" escape in the fashion of Freneau, Cooper, Twain, Garland or Anderson. All but Freneau were dreadfully disillusioned. Historical content, then, will be used to explain the effect of reality upon the art of the modern American novelist.

(1) p. 194. Humanism in America, Farrar and Rinehart, NY 1930. (Essay) "Pandora's Box in American Fiction" by Harry Hayden Clark.

(2) ibid. ad lib.

(2) Function

The critical battle of the twenties was suggestive of the United States Artillery at San Juan, for in those days before smokeless powder, it was necessary to cease all firing while the smoke cleared away in order to determine just what, if anything, had been accomplished. One can now see that a good many critics were mortally wounded and that, as usual, sparks of God were upon all sides. Possibly a 'synthetic'(a) critical function might best preserve the more"fruitful" principles of these war-town, provided that any unpleasant scientific suggestion in this term be definitely disavowed. While the fatigued champions are quiet for the moment, let others take the opportunity to re-dress the balance in favour of good old-fashioned judicial criticism. At the same time, odd bits of truth may be rifled from the bodies of exhausted impressionistic, appreciative and Crocean soldiery. Mr. Mencken's "moment of romantic weakness" in "catalytic" criticism (1) must always be used against him, and as for the Humanist cannoneers, their marksmanship proved accurate enough to assure them considerable deference. With such valorous encounters in mind, the student went out into his backyard for sling-shot practice.

(D) Adequacy of the Novel as an Art-Form and as an Expression of Life.

(a) Objections (Chiefly Humanistic) (2)

Form-lessness

(1) It has often been held that the novel is a "triumph of formlessness." This charge bears directly upon two phases of

(a) Unfortunately the term means method rather than function.

(1) p. 89 Criticism in America: Its Function and Status. Harcourt, Brace N.Y. 1924. (Essay) "Criticism of Criticism of Criticism" H. L. Mencken.

(2) Mostly lecture material.

the American evolution: the short story influence and the 'epic' tendency, re-emphasized by recent "Proletarian" novel experiments. The former is a conscious repudiation of formlessness, while the latter suggests the danger of it.

In short novels like "Ethan Frome" or "The Lost Lady" (1) the purpose is definitely compression and eclectic connotation. These books can almost be read in "the single sitting" and the unity is artfully preserved to give a single impression. The novel has gained greatly from such adaptation and veered away noticeably from the meandering "three-decker" technique of the nineteenth century. So accepted has such technique become, indeed, that "The American Tragedy," obviously in accord with the older tradition of three volumes for your money's worth, was immediately criticized for undue length. But the objection was sustained since the second volume could have been easily telescoped by the elimination of 'lumber.' Unfortunately Dreiser has had little conception of twentieth century standards. American demands for speed are for once the cause of better art. Where the context will allow, monotonous "he saids" and "she saids" have (2) been omitted from the dialogue. The whole effort of the modern novelist has been expended upon the significant, wherever the short story influence has held sway. "The Lost Lady" and "My Mortal Enemy" mark this trend in Willa Cather's work.

In documentarian work of the Dreiserian, Lewisonian order, form is lost sight of to be sure. The epic type, the present

(1) The short novel, "novelette" and "novella" are discussed more fully on pages 51,121 and 149 (2)

(2) As in Zona Gale's Faint Perfume.

continental return to the one-thousand-page novel (1), and the "Proletarian" efforts at group portrayal demand a "mastery of the great canvas" exceedingly difficult to attain. Against failures of the Dreiser sort, the charge of formlessness is justly lodged, but these subjects may be best studied in chronological order. Suffice it to say that complaint about lack of form is in general based upon a one-eyed judgment that sees not the substantial exception and can make no concession to the accomplishment of expert hands.

Destructive of Standards

(2) A common humanistic grievance is that writers like Huxley, Joyce and Cabell destroy standards without setting up any new ones in their places. It can only be suggested here that in the American field a great deal of destruction was a necessary preliminary. If builder and destroyer are not always combined in the same writer, no great alarum need be sounded. In the case of James Branch Cabell, it is hoped that later pages will prove him to have certain very definite standards, in many respects excellent.

Vernacular

(3) It is further objected that the romantic genius of the naturalist with his "cross-section" of life attempts to establish his originality by trampling verbal decorum underfoot. The problem of vernacular in literature is an interesting one. Those who have sought to make capital out of the native vernacular cannot hope to live out a decade. Yesterday's "slanguage" is as dead as yesterday's newspaper, except to an occasional, curious scholar. Dreiser's work affords endless examples of 'journalese'

(1) As in Thomas Mann's Magic Mountain.

trite in 1900. Only compensating merit in other qualities can save such writing from oblivion. Perhaps in his case "Jennie Gerhardt" has the best chance for survival. Sinclair Lewis's work is generally published abroad with a glossary, even in England. (1) Although "Main Street" and "Babbitt" may remain permanently in the dictionaries along with "Mrs. Grundy" (now recalled solely as a "person referred to in an old play, whose name has become proverbial for that part of society which is narrowly conventional as to the proprieties" (2)) it is difficult to imagine either book carefully foot-noted and ranged among the "classics" of the future. Rather would such books be listed as"optional reading" for social history students in the year of their Lord,2000. O. Henry's slang still has a most familiar ring, yet he follows Lardner into a dim past. For one reason or another, these names are not strict analogies, yet a glance at their writings gives perspective to the "Zenith Zip Citee" style.

Photographic Realism

(4) Examples of unrestrained photographic realism in the American novel are unquestionably to be lamented on the ground that art is by no means an exact imitation of life. This type of work suggests the current cinema and all sorts of valid objections. It can only be condoned as an experiment prefatory to a more eclectic and imaginative native literature.

"The Cult of Vertigo"

(5) The Andersonian "cult of vertigo," the hypnotic, buzzing style, finds condemnation in the humanistic ranks. If such a style could be used sparingly and mixed with some first-class,

(1) cp. English editions of Main Street and Babbitt.

(2) Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 3rd Edition of Merriam Series. G. & C. Merriam Co. Springfield 1927.

eighteenth-century prose, the result might prove extremely effective. Useful technical experiment had much better be accorded a place, however limited, than be excluded because the inventor could not perfect proportion.

"Railing at Idiots"

(6) When Flaubert suggested that a person who continually railed at idiots ran the risk of becoming an idiot himself (1), he made an observation applicable to the Menckenesque Smart Set. Cabell wearies on this level, but seldom descends to it. (2) Lewis sadly overdoes his case (3), whereas Mencken proves conclusively to some idiots that there are other idiots. If it was all a task that had to be done, one can at least turn in preference to the Zona Gale treatment of the same theme. (4)

Outer Control

(7) The unfortunate tendency to substitute the "condition reflex" of environment for any individual responsibility has put its mark upon the character-work of certain writers to be considered "en route." In this field, environmental predestination has taken heavy toll on freedom of the will — nowhere more fittingly observed than in Dreiser.; but having steered a middle course through some perfectly solid objections to our novel, let us consider the more favorable side of the matter.

(1) p. 109 Rousseau and Romanticism, Irving Babbitt 6th impression, Houghton Mifflin Co. N.Y. 1930.

(2) about the "great tumble-bug" censor in "A Foreword" to Jurgen Grosset & Dunlop, 20th printing Sept. 1927.

(3) Babbitt and Main Street ad lib.

(4) notably in Faint Perfume and Miss Lulu Bett.

(b) Advantages

Frank Norris's Opinion (1903)

Undoubtedly "today is the day of the novel. In no other day and by no other vehicle is contemporaneous life so adequately expressed; and the critics of the twenty-second century, reviewing our times, striving to reconstruct our civilization, will look not to the painters, not to the architects nor dramatists, but to the novelists to find our idiosyncrasy." (1) So spake Frank Norris in 1903. Robert Morss Lovett (2) in 1931 phrases the matter thus: "The novel is the form of literature most characteristic, most popular and most powerful today. It corresponds in our civilization to the epic in the primitive stages in many races, to the drama in the Athens of Pericles or the England of Elizabeth, to the essay in the Age of Queen Anne." This latter view overshoots the mark insofar as the essay is concerned - a form more nearly comparable to the short story in popularity. It does, none the less, suggest the flexible way in which the novel has absorbed characteristic elements from other art-forms and, at best, welded them into a satisfactory whole. The present age has a peculiar complexity that can only be so comprehended.

R. M. Lovett's Opinion (1931)

(1) p. 5. Responsibilities of the Novelist, Frank Norris. Doubleday, Page & Co. N.Y. 1903.

(2) p. 9. op. cit. R.M.Lovett

II. How The Quest Begins

(A) European Antecedents (I)

Even without attempting any formal discussion of European antecedents, it is helpful to consider a few foreign novelists of the nineteenth century, whose writings have had an important bearing upon modern American literature. Past and present are closely related here. In the France of that time, naturalism was fought out to a virtual finish. Add to the reasons already cited for America's tardiness in passing through her literary ordeal, that potent, soporific, anglo-saxon burgher ideology. The qualities in writers about to be mentioned are qualities constantly under discussion within the field proper of this study. Therefore, a short, specific digression at this juncture is of more value than later slip-shod reference in the usual manner.

Zola

(1) Zola "was bent upon painting humanity from highest to lowest in its most intimate workings, and to do this he invaded the lowest depths of vice and crime (compare William Faulkner.) While his style is free and flowing, it depends for effect more in mass than in detail, with no suggestion of the exquisite polish of Flaubert." (2) Our own Theodore, of course, uses the same mass of detail, but he can no more invade the realm of highest humanity than Edith Wharton can portray the lowly. One would picture the well-bred in diamonds supping champagne at the breakfast table, while the other would insist that no plebeian dinner be set without liver and bacon. The pretensions of science handicap

(I) C.H.C.Wright, A History of French Literature Oxford Press N.Y.'25
(2) preface XXII to Madame Bovary, Gustave Flaubert. Albert and Charles Boni, N.Y. 1930.

both Zola and Dreiser, although the naturalistic trend toward a highly specialized vocabulary is more evident in Lewis's "Arrowsmith" or in certain passages of Gale's "Faint Perfume." "In order to follow some of the passages in Balzac's 'César Biratteau,' one needs to be a lawyer or a professional accountant, and it has been said that in order to do justice to a certain description in Zola, one would need to be a pork-butcher." (1)

Flaubert

(2) "The predominant flavor in Flaubert's writing as a whole is that of an acrid disillusion." (2) He himself expresses this attitude: "I had in my very youth a complete presentiment of life. It was like a sickly kitchen smell escaping from a basement window." (2) A good many of these odours escaped from American literary basements after the war. Flaubert wrote "Madame Bovary" between 1850 and 1856, "the middle period of French naturalism," (3) and Lovett points out that he developed more satisfactorily because the initial experimenting of the school was on record for his benefit. American naturalists, for the most part, have relied upon their own re-experimentation. The author's inevitability and objectivity, at least in theory, became naturalistic stock-in-trade, but few followers could continue the technique of "le mot juste."

(1) p. 58 Irving Babbitt op.cit

(2) pp. 107-108 ibid.

(3) p. 53 Robert Morss Lovett op.cit.

The Brothers Goncourt

(3) As for the brothers Goncourt, Lovett (1) believes that their objectivity came directly from science, realism and a derivative agnosticism even extending to the French middle class; whereas, the English merchant or the materialistic American of this same group turned to didacticism for the better support of his enterprise. Again, the English tradition of permitting auctorial intrusion was opposed to French objectivity - from this tradition grew the subjective "stream of consciousness" approach to reality. Joliet (2), in speaking of the Goncourts, makes a statement suggestive of Sinclair Lewis's sociological novels:

"..... ils prétendaient obéir ainsi à l'impérieux souci d'une documentation scrupuleuse, croyant faire oevre d'historiens, se constituant 'raconteurs du present' comme l'historion est 'raconteur du passe'."

Hardy

(4) All this French technique gradually, much later, became a part of the American novel. There were many ways in which such influences might cross the Atlantic. Hardy's writings indicate one method of passage. But "everywhere in his novels human beings appear to us crushed by a superior force." (3) If this author emphasizes a certain goodness in the earthly struggle, none the less his puppets are eventually overpowered and it is significant that his 'local colour' stories such as "Wessex Folk" appeared in "Har-

(1) p. 16 op.cit.
(2) p. 451 Précis Illustré de la Littérature Francaise. L. Joliet. Librairie Armand Colin. 103 Boulevard Saint-Michel, Paris, 1924.
(3) p. 424 Vol. II A History of English Literature. Emile Legonis and Louis Cazamian. J. M. Dent and Sons Lt. London and Toronto 1926. (Helen Douglas Irvine, translator)

per's" in 1890 and 1891. (1) "Jude the Obscure" was scarcely recognizable in American form. (note a)

(B) Domestic Continuation

Hamlin Garland (I860-)

(1) Attention now passes over the important psychological contributions of Henry James and the 'watery' realism of William Dean Howells, to the more vital questing after truth displayed by Hamlin Garland in "Crumbling Idols," 1894. In fact, this writer remained somewhat of a Howells realist because he could not bring himself to tell the worst about "The Middle Border." Yet the desire is in him, as he talks about his "veritism:"

"The theory of the veritist is, after all, a statement of his passion for truth and for individual expression. The passion does not spring from theory; the theory rises from the love of the verities which seems to increase day by day all over the western world." (2)

"In all that I have written upon local literature, I have told the truth as I saw it." (3) Certainly "Main

1891 Travelled Roads" fell like a bombshell into the romantic trenches where the farmer had been traditionally treated. James and Howells were calling attention to French and Russian realism but they verged upon peasant portrayal of the agrarian. Later, Garland went into the Henry George movement for reform and was unable thereafter to regain his old force, yet he had immeasurably advanced the Eggleston-Kirkland-Howe natively-realistic growth.

(1) vols. 82 and 83
(2) p. 21 Crumbling Idols by Hamlin Garland. Stone & Kimball Chicago 1894.
(3) p. 22 ibid.
(a) p.I5 Pattee op.cit.

Stephen Crane (I87I-I900)

(2) This growth is closely linked with the books by Stephen Crane: "Maggie, a Girl of the Streets" (1892, 1896) and "The Red Badge of Courage: An Episode of the American Civil War" (1896). Some claim that "modern American fiction may be said to begin with Stephen Crane." (1) To a large degree, "style was the man," (2) if one understands this style to illustrate William James's associative theory of genius. He had the ability to achieve absolute vividness through an impressionistic technique generally based on 'colour imagism'. Characters went unnamed and bloodless that these images might stand out all the more sharply. Eben Crane's short, staccato sentence tempo is forward looking. The ordinary plot structure he dropped along with contemporary moralizing. In one sense, Crane was a reporter, but such another journalist has not yet appeared. Although the hint that his writings derived from French sources always angered him, Pattee thinks there must have been some influence, perhaps unconsciously felt. But a position of real importance and the grant of unusual associative genius cannot be denied him.

Frank Norris (I870-I902)

(3) Crane achieved a delicate essence of reality quite outside the prevailing, contemporary clamour for blunt truth. It was Frank Norris (3) who set up in this department as

(1) p. 47 American and British Literature Since 1890 by Carl and Mark Van Doren, Century Co. N.Y. and London 1925.

(2) pp. 64-72 The New American Literature by Fred Lewis Pattee Students' Edition Century Co. N.Y. and London 1930.

(3) especially pp.78-I0I Frank Norris by Franklin Walker Doubleday,Doran N.Y.I932

the archtype of the period. His was naturalism "a la francaise," tempered by some incurable romanticism. (1)

"The Truth, By God!"

Norris represents full rebellion against the bookish Victorian tradition in American letters and the then popular historical novel, to write which he says, "A man need not know men, just clothes and lingo, the 'what-ho-without-there' gabble. But if he only chose he could find romance and adventure in Wall Street or Bond Street," (2) advice that was soon to be followed, for this last sentence illustrates the way adventure was transferred to 'real life' under the Rooseveltian muckrakers. As to the earlier historical work, "no one can find fault with those few good historical novels that started the fad. There was good workmanship in these, and honesty. But the copyists, the fakirs - they are not novelists at all, though they write novels that sell by the hundreds of thousands. They are business men." (3) (Perhaps like Booth Tarkington.) The sincere novelists "will be able to say: 'I never truckled; I never took off my hat to Fashion and held it out for pennies. By God, I told them the truth. They liked it or they didn't like it. What had that to do with me? I told them the truth; I knew it for the truth then, and I know it for the truth now.'" (4) Sarah Orne Jewett passed the same counsel along to Willa Cather; "Write the

(1) pp. 36-48 Pattee, op. cit.
(2) p. 20 Responsibilities of the Novelist Frank Norris Doubleday, Page N.Y. 1903.
(3) p. 15, 16 ibid.
(4) p. 22, ibid.

truth," she said, "and let them take it or leave it." (1) Obviously this literary nugget of wisdom was going the rounds at the opening of the new century.

Democratic Literary Ideal

Norris linked his theory with a democratic ideal in literature: "It is all very well to jeer at the People and at the People's misunderstanding of the arts, but the fact is indisputable that no art that is not in the end understood by the People can live or ever did live a single generation." (2) This suggests sort of an exemplification of the Rooseveltian "square deal" for the commoner, as Norris's 'blonde beast' (3) characters bring the code of "The Strenuous Life" to mind.

(1) p. 262 Pattee op.cit.

(2) p. 7 Frank Norris op.cit.

(3) "McTeague was a young giant carrying his shock of blonde hair six feet three inches from the ground; moving his intense limbs, heavy with ropes of muscle, slowly, ponderously. His hands were enormous, read and covered with a fell of stiff yellow hair; they were hard as wooden mallets, strong as vises, the hands of the old-time car-boy. Often he dispensed with forceps and extracted a refractory tooth with his thumb and finger. His head was square cut, angular; the jaw salient, like that of a carnivora." (p. 4 McTeague and a Man's Woman A - III. "Complete Works of Frank Norris" P. F. Collier & Son N.Y.)

"A Neglected Epic"

The West, where the life had apparently been lived to the full, attracted Norris as the subject for "A Neglected Epic." (1) He was "a leader in the little movement to 'continentalize' American literature as a protest against local color," (2) and sought the "great canvas" with considerable success in "The Octopus" (1901). This novel strikes a pioneer muckrake note in the treatment of railroads. Although a most important part of Norris's work is actually of the twentieth century, his spirit is more nearly that of the minority rebel during the 1890's.

Lesser Figures

4.) America's first burst of this type of truth-questing includes many lesser literary figures. Harold Frederic, "local colorist and historical romancer," (3) wrote what was considered in 1896 a most daring treatment of American Methodism: "The Damnation of Theron Ware," a book of far better quality than Sinclair Lewis's treatment of the same theme in "Elmer Gantry." Henry Blake Fuller (4) was virtually the dean of the Chicago "school." He was native born and remained in Chicago throughout his life. As one of the earliest critics of the "Hog-Butcher's" materialism, he followed out his ideas in "The Cliff Dwellers" (1893) and "With the Procession." 1895. Among the others of this group to come into later prominence were Edgar Lee Masters, Sherwood Anderson, George Ade, Emerson Hough, William Vaughn Moody, Rex Beach, Floyd Dell, Ben Hecht, Robert Herrick, Hamlin

(1) chapter title p. 59 Responsibilities of the Novelist Frank Norris
(2) p. 260 The American Novel Carl Van Doren MacMillan NY 1929
(3) pp. 216-217 Pattee op.cit.
(4) p. 27 Pattee op.cit. & "Henry Blake Fuller" by Victor Schultz Bookman: vol.70(Sept.1929) pp.34-38

Garland, Theodore Dreiser and Earnest Poole. The city nourished all these writers at one time or another, chiefly after the awakening that came with the World Fair in 1892 and the opening of the University of Chicago during the same year under W. R. Harper's guidance. For a time culture seemed to be humming in this momentary "literary capital of the United States." (1) Then New York bought up the material.

III. Concomitant Quest for Illusion: The Historical Romance (1896-1902)

Thus far, the search for truth has led through what was, at the time, a minor literary channel. The eight years between 1890 and 1902 developed what Professor Pattee terms, "The Indian Summer of Waverley Romance." (2) In a sense, local colour was adapted to a larger scale. The movement seems to have been a sort of recoil from the harsher type of realism that was rapidly gaining head and it followed closely in the wake of Stevenson. Carl Van Doren notes that within a short time after "Kidnapped" (1886) "history in the American novel assumed an importance it had not had since Cooper and Hawthorne." (3) Heavy emphasis was laid upon the American background, whilst in particular Virginia furnished pleasantly aristocratic material. A writer like Mary Johnston would 'have and to hold' the type even after the vogue passed. A James Branch Cabell could simply temper this early romantic fiction with sophisticated disillusion and establish thereby

(1) p. 23 Pattee op.cit.
(2) p. 85 ibid.
(3) p. 247 Carl Van Doren op.cit.

a rather formidable reputation. Frank Norris's opinion of the school has already been noted and it went not far astray. The Spanish-American War gave an additional fillip to the spirit of polite adventure, largely under the impetus of such men as Hearst's "pen and pencil," Frederic Remington, and Richard Harding Davis, whose mother was responsible for the "first bit of mordant realism in the history of American literature." (1) It is quite fitting that America's entrance upon the stage of world affairs should be accompanied by a romantico-historical fanfare, but the war was more immediately the preface to a vigourous muckraking campaign. There is no need for more than a glance over a selected list of titles: (2)

Selected List of Titles

1896. "Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc," Mark Twain
1897. "The Choir Invisible," James Lane Allen
1897. "Soldiers of Fortune," Richard Harding Davis
1897. "Hugh Wynne," S. Weir Mitchell
1898. "When Knighthood Was In Flower," Charles Major
1898. "Prisoners of Hope," Mary Johnston
1898. "Via Crucis," F. Marion Crawford
1899. "To Have and to Hold," Mary Johnston
1899. "Janice Meredith," Paul Leicester Ford
1899. "Richard Carvel," Winston Churchill, who, between 1904 and 1906 made the transition from romance to muckrake.
1900. "Monsieur Beaucaire," Booth Tarkington

(1) p. 57 Pattee op.cit.

(2) p. 90 ibid.

1900. "Alice of Old Vincennes," Maurice Thompson

1900. "The Heart's Highway," Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, who (among others) turns for the moment away from her own New England to a tale of "Ole Virginny." It is noteworthy that 1900, the year of "Sister Carrie," has some six historical romances listed in Pattee.

1901. "The Tory Lover," Sarah Orne Jewett. "Write the truth and let them take it or leave it," she said. (1) Apparently they were leaving it.

1901. "The Crisis," Winston Churchill

1902. "The Conqueror," Gertrude Atherton. (2)

1902. "The Virginian," Owen Wister. (The heavy touch of "the big stick" again.)

1902. "The Battleground," Ellen Glasgow.

1902. "The Valley of Decision," Edith Wharton

(1) cp. Note (1) page 18

(2) This book is interesting as a beginning of the later 'fictionized' biography of the André Maurois sort. The writer's originality and daring was further shown in writing Van Dine 'detectives' before Van Dine, in treating miscegenation in "Senator North," and later using similarly advanced themes. Intelligent, always ahead of her times, Mrs. Atherton maintained in 1897 that William Dean Howells wrote "for boarding school misses." (p. 394 Literature and Insurgency J.C. Underwood. M. Kennerley N.Y. 1914.) Unfortunately hers is a case of faults nullifying merits.

By their very nature, these books could please only for a short time. Winston Churchill laboured conscientiously on until "The Crossing" came out in 1904. He then found that he had overslept his station - Waverley was two miles back. In the meantime Rooseveltian literature had caught the public favour. The trend was toward the same adventure, yet this time in 'real life.' "Laissez-faire" republicanism had permitted Trust-Dragons to attain monstrous size and slaying them was the best sport in the world. The recent war had shown that adventure was still possible, more excitement was needed and perhaps the Norris truth formula could supply the proper technique. Most important of all, the country had developed to that fully-populated point at which a more careful economic adjustment becomes necessary. This meant criticism and criticism of America, by Americans, for Americans, is still with us today.

IV. "The Stremuous Life" of "The Muckraker" (1900-1910) (1)

The Man

Theodore Roosevelt's famous speech on "The Stremuous Life" was published in October, 1900. Seldom has a public man been so symbolic of his time, and indeed seldom has a public man seemed to exercise such a powerful effect upon that time. Yet, in this case, the semblance was the reality itself.

(1) pp. 81-98 Pre-War America vol. III of "Our Times" series. Mark Sullivan. Charles Scribner's Sons N.Y. and London 1930

The Theory

The theory held by leaders of the period was perfectly at home on the American heath; in fact it was a leftover of nineteenth century humanitarian idealism: Mankind is basically good. Draw evil to his attention and it is automatically corrected by the pressure of public opinion operating through the legislature. Unfortunately several long-agitated reforms, like prohibition, were on the brink of Utopian fruition. This circumstance lent a deceptive air of plausibility to the good work, the initiation of which is attributed to S. S. McClure, who set forth to found a 15c. magazine and incidentally founded a genre - "the literature of exposure." Muckraking, in fine, was merely a phase of Rousseauistic humanitarianism. The idealism carried along well enough under Wilson, with sufficient vitality to enlist American co-operation for the World War. "Jennie Gerhardt" and Mark Twain's embittered "What Is Man?" conveniently keep the real undercurrents in mind. By 1912 H. L. Mencken was beginning to prophesy, thereby suggesting the inevitable step to "The Lost Generation."

Albeit, confidence was by no means lacking among the early "debunkers." Not until Roosevelt used the Bunyan term by which the whole movement is now known did responsible persons desert the standard. Such was the defection of Ray Stannard Baker as "David Grayson," author of "Essays in

Contentment," printed as early as 1907. (1) One recalls, at the same time, that Nietzsche was not unknown; Shaw was busy with "Man and Superman" and Ibsen's Nora slammed the door nightly upon the stage. As the machine's power grew, a final effort was made to emphasize man's elemental, animal vigour and independence. Writers eagerly snatched doughty heroes out of the past and put them into the present, frequently stressing a softer side for soft-boiled compensation. Gene Stratton Porter's "A Girl of the Limberlost" (1909) illustrates the latter element. Here nature and Almighty God combined to give a misty-eyed touch of sentiment to the hurly-burly world.

Hard-boiled

Soft-boiled

"Of all the fads, the most legitimate, the most abiding, the most inherent - so it would appear - is the "Nature" revival. Indeed, it is not fair to call it a fad at all. For it is a return to the primitive, sane life of the country, and the natural thing by its very character cannot be a 'fad'." (2) Of course Norris approved. Stewart Edward White was 'blazing the trail' along with Jack London. Owen Wister, after a 'roughing it' excursion west with Roosevelt, mixed superman with cowboy background and produced "The Virginian." But in justice to Roosevelt, it must be said that he drew the line at permitting animals to think like humans after the Ernest Thompson Seton - Reverend William Joseph Long fashion. At least the

(1) p. 157 Pattee op.cit.

(2) p. 138, 139 Responsibilities of the Novelist Frank Norris

President was theoretically right, although it is doubtful whether his charges were either accurate or, in point of fact, even applicable to Long. (1)

1. Jack London. (2)(1876-1916)

If there were not so many of these 'symbolic figures,' one would be tempted to call Jack London the personification of "the strenuous life." Still, his is a case for superlatives. He knew Oakland, California, that last remnant of our frontier, from boyhood. He knew it at that time when thugs had not yet returned to prey upon Chicago. "At seventeen," he says, "I was a drunken bum." (3) Again the familiar disposition of the expansive ego to tell all and tell it blunt. "I was in the pit, the abyss, the human cesspool, the shambles and charnel-house of our civilization... I could see myself only raging through life without end like one of Nietzsche's 'blond beasts', lustfully roving and conquering by sheer superiority and strength." But "better to reign among booze-fighters, a prince, than to toil twelve hours a day at a machine at ten cents an hour." (3) (4) Here, indeed, was "nature red in tooth and claw," a naturalist arrested, however, before complete development by that bogey of them all, reform zeal. London "experienced the harsh contacts of a seasonal worker and tramp. (He) became a Marxian socialist and revolutionist, preaching the war of

(1) p. 147 et seq. Mark Sullivan op.cit.
(2) p. 121-143 Pattee, op.cit.
(3) p. 125 ibid.
(4) p. 126 ibid.

the classes in 'The Iron Heel', 1908, (and) 'The Revolution', 1910. (In) 'Martin Eden', 1909, (he) showed profound contempt for bourgeois standards." (1) Thus London had his roots in naturalistic and muckrake soil. His popularity abroad was enormous. Even Russians knew "Yaklunnon." (2)

"The Call of the Wild" (1903) was "a study in atavism, brilliant, poetic, set against a wild Alaskan background" and showed "the resurgence of the primitive wolf instincts in a domesticated dog." (1) But this Alaskan background was soon exhausted; consequently "he added the South Seas to his literary area and tried to do for them what he had done for Alaska, but it was only a changing of the drop-scenery and the make-up." (3) Pattee finds parallels favorable to London in Cooper, Harte, Kipling, and Conrad; in fact more than justice is generally done this writer. Undoubtedly he possesses much historical interest, what with the seeming paradox, the use of setting, the pictorial aim, "et cetera." Yet when his achievements are summed up, the matter resolves itself into the task of explaining the distinction between clap-trap and " cantrap."

(1) p. 352 Main Currents in American Thought III V.L. Parrington Harcourt, Brace N.Y. 1931.
(2) p. 141 Pattee op.cit.
(3) p. 134 ibid.

2. Upton Sinclair (1878 --)

"'It is a fact,' says Mr. Sinclair, 'that when American novelists are discussed, my name is systematically omitted.'" (1) Possibly it is a mistake to disregard the wise precedent so graciously acknowledged by the author himself. Pattee "lingers a moment" (2) over his realistic warbook, "Manassas," considered by London better than "The Red Badge," but no one is justified in devoting any attention to the literary qualities of Sinclair - propaganda has always minimized them, for "he is the self appointed war correspondent of the Socialist party, always present at the latest battle against privilege, and always gathering statistics - with affadavits if possible - for his next book.... Sinclair's literary activity has been prodigious. His countless articles and forty or more books more than equal the Old and New Testaments combined twice over.... But unfortunately (he) has hated injustice more than he has loved justice." (3) Always an excellent preacher to the already-converted, Sinclair may have hindered his own cause by estranging the intelligent from his extreme standard. The method throughout his books has been simple - imply the good by showing up the bad in unmistakable fashion. But excessive zeal is likely to defeat itself.

(1) p. 101 The Men Who Make Our Novels George Gordon Moffatt, Yard N.Y. 1919
(2) p. 153 Pattee op.cit.
(3) p. 90 "Upton Sinclair" by L. S. Morris New Republic vol. 54 (March 7, 1928)

"The Jungle" was a packing-house exposure printed in 1906. It proved a great triumph in an unintended way, for the author, intent upon bettering the lot of Chicago workers, soon found that the public was deeply concerned with the improvement of sanitary conditions under which its meat was prepared. The book was more of an inevitability than an original thesis, however, inasmuch as Chicago had been under fire for one reason or another since the nineties and Robert Herrick's "Memoirs of an American Citizen" (1905) was prevocative of the general theme.

Upton Sinclair invested the profits of this work in his twentieth century Brook Farm experiment, which he called "Helicon Hall." (1) During the short period of its existence, Sinclair Lewis, one of the inmates, suffered a bit of youthful disillusion. Of course the Sinclair list of works is too long to discuss or even title; enough to say that a great range of subject was treated according to the exposure, socialistic, or proletarian bias of the author. Rockefeller coal fields in Colorado, wealth and newspapers, education, the Sacco-Vanzetti case, of such subjects were the novels composed. Usually actual life of timely interest was sufficiently sugar-coated to entice that class of readers hostile to pure reason. "The Wet Parade" (1931), 'blurbed' as "his most daring novel," takes hold of Prohibition at the proper psychological moment and furthermore

(1) p. 155 Pattee op.cit.

shows that the author has stood by his creed of truth for some thirty years. Sincerity cannot be denied him, nor can one refrain from admiring his determination to educate 'the Peepul.' It is doubtful whether the author himself, archtype of muckraker that he is, would seriously demand more eloquent homage.

3. David Graham Phillips (1867-1911)

As Jack London represents "The Strenuous Life," as Upton Sinclair represents "The Muckraker," so David Graham Phillips illustrates how these two aspects of the Rooseveltian decade fuse into a modified combination of both, best characterized as the 'problem novel.'

The Problem Novel

This type of writing is generally marked by an obtrusive editorial point of view and a rather thin, concrete problem to solve, like honesty, political advancement, home or career, or whatever. It is of the reform nature and the problem receives the lion's share of emphasis. Within this scope the term 'problem novel',contemptuously applied after 1918, is ordinarily used. On the other hand, it can be developed into less wooden variations of considerable artistic merit. Ernest Poole treats sociologic themes; Herrick and Irwin Edman are concerned with spiritual conflict; Edith Wharton cannot forget the problem of social custom. This last writer has never been considered a problem novelist. In the strict sense of the term, she is not one because she subordinates her riddle of individual vs.

convention to a less perceptible degree. Nonetheless, she illustrates the later literary developments of some worth that retained much of the old manner. Because the term in question when out of style after the War, persons tend to forget that the tradition survived in a modified form.

But Churchill, better regarded as a problem novelist than as an historical romancer, never outgrew the limitations of the strict definition, and it is interesting to remember that Wharton retained history in many of her books. David Graham Phillips, however, furnishes an example of the problem novel in its earlier, muckraker phase.

Content

"He believed - and proposed his doctrines in 'The Reign of Gilt' (1905) - that democracy is essentially more decent and more efficient than aristocracy; that most of the confusions and distortions of American life arise from the restricting hand which various forms of privilege lay upon it; that it is the duty as well as the natural behavior of the novelist to reveal existent conditions without favors or reserves." (1) Here again is the belief in Democracy Triumphant and twenty-three novels in ten years to support it. (2) Underwood calls him "the Roosevelt of American literature," and rightly, since his activity put him ahead of Upton Sinclair in popular prominence.

(1) p. 265,266 Carl Van Doren op.cit.
(2) p. 149, 151 Pattee op.cit. (Reference covers remainder of quotation unless noted.)

(The only excuse for so many typical figures springs from the unusual unity of spirit during this decade.) After a preliminary tilt at politics called "The Treason of the Senate," Phillips proceeded to a vigorous attack upon manners and social evils, emphasizing particularly "the spiritual and mental poverty of the women of our conventional upper class." (1) The modern American woman he described as a bad housewife, a selfish mother and helpmate. Such titles as "Old Wives for New" or "The Husband's Story" are characteristic. "Light-Fingered Gentry" (1907) treated the life insurance companies in accordance with the responsibilities of the Phillips novelist, while Charles Evans Hughes undoubtedly appreciated such helpful publicity. But the muckrake work of Phillips was ineffective beyond the decade; other writers carried on his more general social criticism. No one today would claim intrinsic literary merit for him on any basis.

V. Variations of the Problem Novel

Transition of social criticism

As the muckraker initiated the period of intellectual ferment from the Spanish War to the World War, the problem novel carried along the spirit of those times in some of the variant ways suggested. Parrington unifies the matter in the following way: (2) The critical movement, he says, was represented in politics by capitalistic Progressivism (in person by Roosevelt, Taft and Wilson).

(1) p. 180 Literature and Insurgency J. C. Underwood

(2) pp. 366-351 V.L. Parrington op.cit.

When the hollowness of this approach became apparent, economics was emphasized as the root of the difficulty. "Laissez-faire" was rejected and a socialism derived chiefly from Germany and England gained ground.

On the literary side of the development, "Puritan reticence, smug respectability ..., middle-class optimism and sentimentality" were attacked, but not in concert until 1920. Only after the War did Mencken, Lewisohn "et al " discharge their full store of ammunition. The pre-war period expressed its literary opinion in the problem novel, a glorification of the earlier Upton Sinclair technique. Parrington further maintains that, except for Cabell and Wharton, not a writer escaped, naturalistic or romantic. The fact of the matter is that Cabell alone emerged wholly unscathed.

(1) Winston Churchill (1) (1871 -)

Historical Romance

Winston Churchill, a careful student, usually spent two years in the preparation of each book. Parrington calls him a "representative ..., conscientious, middle-class romantic." (1) He wrote three historical novels designed in trilogy form to present the growth of America. The first of these, "Richard Carvel" (1899), used a Maryland and Virginian background of Colonial times. The villian was a Loyalist and the hero was a patriot. So much for that.

(1) p. 348 ibid. Parrington's interpretation is preferable to Pattee or others.

"The Crisis" (1901) dealt with the Civil War and referred in particular to that baffling question Lincoln asked Douglas. "The Crossing", concerned with the winning of the West and published in 1904, was out of fashion before it was written. It is not necessary to inquire deeply into Mr. Churchill's art; he seems to hold pretty closely to nineteenth century methods. Sienkiewicz and Thackeray are usually linked with his name in regard to historical writing. (1) Rather is it important to place him among the problem novelists, instead of in "Waverly Romance" under Professor Pattee's (1) classification. Such confusion probably arises from the fact that Churchill applied himself with typical industry to this type of writing; yet the man himself appears more rightfully placed in the development of problems. In short, although transitional, he is more important at this end than at the other.

Political Problems

Once a member of the New Hampshire Legislature and later a defeated candidate for Governor, experience admirably fitted Churchill to embrace 'Bull Moose' Progressivism. "Coniston" (1906) pictures Ruel Durkee, a Cornishman, as the politician, Jethro Bass, "who for years had carried the state of New Hampshire in his vest pocket." (2) "Mr. Crewe's Career" (1908) was "Coniston" a generation later, only railroad consolidation had brought about absentee dictatorship of state politics from New York.

(1) pp. 95, 96 Pattee op.cit.

(2) p. 97 ibid.

Economic Problems

After romance and politics, Churchill turned to a more economic novel. "The Inside of the Cup" (1913) attacked "old dogmas" and attempted to find the democratic springs of Christianity." (1) The church was found to be controlled by business subscriptions, just as was the case with Robert Herrick's university in "Chimes." The solution for the church was to be sought in a free pulpit, supported by the common people, and from which a new social Christianity might be preached. Churchill carried his democratic theory straight into literature. On the last page of "The Crisis" he says, "Any book, however deep, can be written in terms that everybody can comprehend," a statement suggesting both Frank Norris and that uncharitable expression, "the mob spirit in literature." "A Far Country" (1915) brought out the emptiness of the profit motive, while "The Dwelling Place of Light" (1917) showed how industrialism might blight native Yankee stock that failed to join with the exploiting class. These books are the evidence for the preceding generalizations. For the purposes of this study, a standard problem novelist has been considered. The plane was higher than the journalistic sensation in Phillips or Sinclair, but it remains to carry the problem novel through four exemplary dilutions, any one of which improves the original liquor.

(1) p. 349 V. L. Parrington op.cit.

Background (2) Robert Herrick (1) (1868 -)

Robert Herrick was born in Cambridge of the New England tradition. After graduating from Harvard, he completed his formal education abroad, where he mastered the French language and European literature. From 1890 to 1893 he taught English at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology under the supervision of George Rice Carpenter. In the latter year, President Harper gave him an opportunity to organize the English department of Chicago University on the Harvard pattern. Herrick remained as head of this department until 1923, returning each year to summer at York Village, Maine. Chicago proved a great literary stimulus to him at an early stage of his career and, like many others, he was fascinated by the size, the materialism of this mid-West metropolis 'on the make.' Much of his experience at the time is recorded in "Chimes" (1926), a semi-autobiographical novel written in retirement.

"Chimes"

The book is by no means a 'college exposure' novel of the ordinary sort; it is far more satisfactory. At the same time, Herrick does reverse a familiar formula by muckraking the faculty and not the students. Yet material that might so easily have gone out of hand twenty years earlier is kept in proper subordination, proving

(1) pp. 31-34 Pattee op.cit.
pp. 349-350 Parrington op.cit. gives brief note.

that there were important literary possibilities in the old problem novel, once it was placed in the proper hands. A few paragraphs will serve to fill in Herrick's Chicago background and show from what stuff one of his best works is made.

Young Beaman Clavercin, a Harvard graduate, goes West to take charge of Doctor Alonzo Harris's English department in Eureka University. The entire institution is in that rough-hewn stage at which tradition is established by the morning bulletin-board -- "There hasn't been a new building for over a year, gentlemen," remarked the President in meeting.(1) Clavercin goes through a series of disillusionments that constitute a valid criticism of the workings of higher education. Scholastic standards are lowered to get the crowd, 'big shot' athletes are favored, while professional snobbery and toadying to wealth are present to a deplorable degree. Larson, "the Founder," manufactures the very paper upon which ideas are written, thereby illustrating the unfortunate dependence of learning from wealth. Consequently the Economics Professor cannot lecture against exploitation, since this very exploitation supplies the necessary money for his salary. Herrick suggests that comradeship between teachers and taught alone can develop college into a "home of the human spirit" which will cultivate the desire to grope on toward truth. Clavercin, in an effort to give greater

(1) p. 130 Chimes

reality to art, attempts a drama of his own called "Why?" It is suppressed, of course, but it emphasizes the problem of socializing art and Herrick's aesthetic concern for the individual spirit. Another character, Beckwith, is absorbed with the group, an interest not personalized or vital enough for the author.

Edith Crandall, Dean of Women at Eureka, embodies the mother spirit of universities, also "the ideal of equality in educational opportunities -- and therefore in life -- for men and women." (1) (Robert Herrick does not hesitate, even in 1926, to tell the reader just what he means!)

Jessica Malory is Edith's "alter-ego" over-developed on the intellectual side. She is liberated and intelligent, but she fails on the humam side, needing more of the purely instinctive maternal attitude, exemplified by a character called Constance Fenton. But with Jessica it was "Austerity!...She was the puritan reincarnated without religious faith." (2) As Clavercin once told her; "You have left no place for feeling." (3) The author's modernism suggests that Jessica should 'vitalize' her intellectual friendship for Clavercin to a greater extent, especially since the respective mates of these two are much better suited to each other, for Edgar Mallory is the best of that sort who sincerely believe in

(1) p. 84 Chimes
(2) p. 220 ibid.
(3) p. 214 ibid.

'progress', while Louise Clavercin hankers after 'success.'

A German, Rudolph Sheimer, represents European sophistication and devotion to learning. He became very fond of Jessica because she was a scholar as well as a professor. "Together," they take a trip to London and Switzerland after the fashion of moderns emancipated from the narrow interpretation of marital bonds, but Rudolph's possessive love-instinct proves too primitive for his companion.

Philosophy

In the treatment of the War and its effect upon Eureka, Professor Herrick shows how his mind has broadened throughout the years. His earlier work, notably "The World Decision" (1914) and "The Conscript Mother" (1916), hints at unquestioning acceptance of Wilsonian catch-phrase idealism, but in "Chimes" the university is regarded as the centre of intelligent thought, a centre that should check jingoistic mob-mania. It is a book that, if grounded in truth, is sufficient reason for publication from retirement. The merit lies in the record of Clavercin's sincere attempt to preserve his spirit in an hostile environment.

When Robert Herrick began writing, he was linked in the popular mind with Rooseveltian radicals. Although he virtually gave up the realistic muckrake after "The Common Lot" (1904) and "The Memoirs of an American Citizen" (1905), (1) and turned to ideals, librarians continued to think of him as an unclean, intellectual radical.

(1) p. 33 Pattee op.cit.

His philosophy has been concerned with vital living, which he has always regarded as more important than the letter of domestic fidelity. For him, a marriage in the traditional vein for its own sake amounts to nothing unless so vitalized ("Together", 1908.) Nature can rejuvenate the withered city-mind through health and vigour, in such a way as to restore normality. "The Master of the Inn"(1908) takes his bass-fishing as a philosophic refreshment quite opposed to the later Hemingway treatment of cruelty in sport. Of course, Chicago was vital enough, but it lacked the refinement necessary to a satisfying life.

Character

Character can be developed only through self-discipline, "for life is, after all, nothing but the capacity to assert a condition of inner equilibrium within the transition of external circumstances." (1) Success is therefore constantly revalued in these terms, while power and money are rejected for knowledge, since "the Gods approve the depth and not the tumult of the Soul." (2)

Underlying Theme

To be sure, this kind of applied philosophy tends toward the ethical rather than the aesthetic. (3) Different applications of it run through Herrick's novels as themes. His central interest he phrases thus: "I think the one subject, consciously or unconsciously, always to be found in my books is the competitive system... its

(1) Frontispiece of Chimes
(2) Title page quotation to Waste
(3) p. 266 Voices of Tomorrow Edwin Bjorkman

influences upon men and women. Whenever I look back into these books, I find the one insistent question implied in almost every chapter, 'What Is Success?'" (1) Parrington calls the key to his thought, "economic determinism." (2)

The method of emphasis employed is a sort of transcendental symbolism of the person, thing, or event. "Chimes" in the American college belfry strike a false note because, although European education goes along with religion, imitation in this country is meaningless. The native bell-ringer of limited ability can play more suitably for America than an accomplished Englishman imported for the purpose. Herrick is a firm believer in the native strand, and seeks to make his settings as well as his subjects comprehend American life. He uses Colorado (3) and Albany (4) in addition to Chicago backgrounds. His characters, since they grow out of an original problem, inevitably suggest the label, despite his own realization of the danger.

Herrick's Realism

In realism Herrick seeks "normalcy." "The realist writes a novel with one purpose in view. And that purpose is, to render into written words the normal aspect of things. The aim of the romanticist is entirely different. He is concerned only with things which are exciting, astonishing -- in a word, abnormal. I do not

(1) p. 154 The Men Who Make Our Novels C.C. Baldwin
(2) p. 352 A.L. Parrington op.cit.
(3) Together
(4) The Master of the Inn

like literary labels, and I think that the names 'realist' and 'romanticist' have been so much mis-used that they are now almost meaningless. The significance of the term changes from year to year; the realists of one generation are the romanticists of the next." (1) Clavercin's play "Why?" satirizes the extremeties of both schools.

Appraisal

The chief reason for relegating Herrick to a second place is that he pleases neither the man in the street nor the man of taste; he is too intellectual for one and too didactic for the other. There is a certain scholarly accuracy about his books that is all well enough but it is only reasonable to demand more imagination from a writer. There is no lightness of touch, no element of humour - merely well-bred heaviness. However, he has written the problem novel to virtual perfection and his relative obscurity is greater than his work justifies.

Economics and Ideals

(3) Ernest Poole (1880 -)

Economic determinism in Herrick brings to mind Ernest Poole's "The Harbor" (1915). This novel represents the chief work of the author and, like the work of most realists, draws heavily upon autobiographic material. The significance of New York harbor in the lives of thousands of persons is the central theme and one of importance, since American novelists have never understood, in the

(1) p. 32 Pattee op.cit.

continental manner, the geographic influence in all its human implications. The mobility of the American population, based on the facility of changing to a 'better' part of the country, accounts for the absence of such treatment, yet by 1915 it was not so easy to escape environment, no matter how overwhelming it might be.

"The Harbor"

"The Harbor" traces the changing industrial order through three stages; (1)

"(1) The old world of small competitive business that is dead.
(2) The present world of corporation control.
(3) The world of syndicalistic control that struggles to be born...

(During the course of the book) the young idealist sets up consecutively;

"(1) The idol of art - aloofness from the mass struggle.
(2) The idol of efficiency by the super-men who rule, in trusteeship.
(3) The idol of mass solidarity and the workers' control."

As a boy, he "saw some dockers rush on a 'scab' ... " and "heard the dull sickening thump as they beat him." (2)

It is a novel of naturalistic, proletarian propaganda, but too well written for this element to be anything save a source of interest to the reader. "The Harbor" entitles Ernest Poole to consideration in his own literary right.

(1) p. 350 Parrington op.cit.
(2) p. 18 The Harbor McMillan N.Y. 1928

The Destroyer 1931

Aside from the social-economic aspect already noted, Mr. Poole has developed a theme in "The Destroyer" which became increasingly popular after the War, namely, the character in quest of his soul. In his own words (1), "'The Destroyer' (is) a portrait of a modern writer who sets out to de-bunk American life, and does some good work but then goes so far that his purely destructive point of view leads him up to a blank wall where life doesn't seem to be worth living." This book, then, is the record of revolt from the cynical 1920's and presents another dilution of the problem novel stock.

Philosophic Problems

(4) Irwin Edman (1896-)

The best product of the period to which "The Destroyer" refers is admirably sketched by Irwin Edman in his "Richard Kane Looks At Life"(1926). The "Preface" sets

The Aim

forth his aim:

"The characteristic emotions and ideas of our generation may, when they are dead, be codified in books, but they are alive now in the hearts and minds of young men. If I mistake not, they are peculiarly living in that small steady stream of undergraduates who, almost forgotten in the noise made by their more hectic classmates, have come to move with grace and pleasure through the regions of the mind. I have selected one of them, Richard Kane, as a type of that sensitive American youth which is trying to find for itself

(1) Letter to "Mr. (Nicholas) Carroll, 367 Lebanon Street, Malden, Mass." From the author at "Franconia, New Hampshire. October 8, '31." (Collector's item)

an order out of contemporary chaos, and an inner peace for its own troubled spirit... I have come to recognize the type almost infallibly. It seems to me to be numerous and important.

"I thought it would be interesting and possibly illuminating to take one of these youths with candor and simplicity, through the characteristic spiritual adventures which a sensitive son of the middle-class is likely to have in college, and, partly because of college, afterward. In so doing, I thought I might incidentally be presenting a picture of the strivings and possible salvation of that part of the younger generation whose future is, perhaps, more important than that of its more advertised brothers...

"I have tried to trace the signal events in the history of Richard's spirit, as they revealed themselves to his slightly older teacher and friend..." (1)

Fulfillment

Edman has used philosophy to develop the "signal events" in the history of an adolescent spirit. The form approaches the essay in a sort of modern Platonic dialogue. It is told throughout in the vein of reminiscence - by a real Professor St. Peter and a composite Tom Outland. (2) Of necessity, the intellectual adventures take on a 'sausage-chain' continuity and the letter device is twice used 'to get across' self-analysis (3).

(1) p. vii Richard Kane Looks At Life Irwin Edman Houghton Mifflin N.Y. 1926.
(2) The Professor's House Willa Cather.
(3) pp. 133 and 317 Edman op.cit.

For somewhat the same purpose Willa Cather permits her reader to come upon the last ten minutes of one of Professor St. Peter's lectures. Throughout Edman's book, he suggests vitalizing experience through the development of taste, pointing a warning finger toward those who merely "look at" life. After this title came out, a host of persons (such as doctors) started looking at life.

Professor Edman brought the problem novel to the verge of philosophical exposition - he did his work well and in a manner that will not date, despite the superfluity of chapters such as "Richard Kane Reads the News," (1) a field which might well have been left to Walter Lippmann. But "Richard" should be read by every one interested in youth - a statement made with the tongue at dead centre between the cheeks.

(5) Edith Wharton (1862 -)

The problem novel now stands forth in something nearer the full diversity of its possibilities. A distinction has been made between the stock type and off-shoots frequently considered as independent growths. Indeed, it is Edith Wharton who supplies the best example of a common confusion: the problem novelist in artistic masquerade. She is an author about whom much has been written, but the quality of these writings leaves a great deal to be desired. Edwin Bjorkman has examined her work in his "Voices of Tomorrow," yet since Mrs. Wharton's voice sounds like the

(1) p. 141

day before yesterday, it is difficult to appreciate the reason for inclusion in that book, even though 1913 be the year in which it was thought proper. In all probability posterity will deal harshly with this pluto-aristocrat of Washington Square, or if one prefers Lewis, with "the grande dame" of American letters (1).

Life

Her life and work represent 'the genteel tradition' very much 'at bay.' The attitude may be expressed in these words, "Je suis venue trop tard dans un monde trop vulgaire." (2) Mrs. Wharton represents 'old-world gentility' insofar as it can be found in this country, what with her family, her wealth, her continental culture, and in literature, the friendship with Henry James (3). The biographical details are familiar. After 1904 she took up permanent residence in France, thus becoming an "emigré" in fact. Along with Gertrude Atherton and Margaret Deland, Mrs. Wharton received the Cross of the Legion of Honor for warwork. This circumstance is interesting because the World War was a kind of intellectual touchstone - writers that embraced it whole-heartedly showed a mental shallowness difficult for them to overcome later. At all events, Edith Wharton has proved herself the good European, and as such she holds to many un-American standards.

(1) "The Repatriated Lewis" W.A. Macdonald in Book Section of Boston Transcript, March 7, 1931.
(2) p.352 V. L. Parrington op.cit.
(3) pp.249-254 Pattee op.cit.

The Problem

In discussing her work, there is no necessity of explaining anything that might be called 'philosophy.' Instead, there are merely recurrent themes, usually connected with the violation of an out-worn social code. Mrs. Wharton has definite solutions for such problems, which seem antiquated at best. In "The Custom of the Country," "Ethan Frome," "Twilight Sleep," "The House of Mirth," "Hudson River Bracketed" and many more, it is the relationship of the individual to the social code that holds the attention. That is the problem that underlies a representative portion of Edith Wharton's work. As the varied aspects of this problem are taken up, the reader must realize that in the work itself these topics do not stand out with anything like monotonous emphasis, for it is in the subordination of the problem to her story that the author's strength lies. And there, too, lies her weakness, for although she may look to what she thinks authentic in European nobility, although she may have enough taste to eschew American middle-class or nouveau riche aspirations, in fact she sets up a distinctly artificial solution to life borrowed from "the good old days." Naturally this tendency harks back to the historial novel. "Old New York" (1924) is a group of four stories dealing with successive decades from the forties to the seventies. The last period is well treated in "The Age of Innocence" (1920). It is usually the social pattern, however, that constitutes the problem,

and for such literature there can be only the faint praise of conceding first-class workmanship. Literature that really 'moves' must deal with intelligent characters sufficiently sensitized to reflect the full complexity of potential tragedy. Elementary emotions draw forth no greater response than, "Sure, he hates that guy." Artificial problems of a social nature baffle only the ignorant. They should never serve as a focal interest.

Recurrent Themes

Mrs. Wharton's first concern is with the tragedy of divorce, emphasized particularly in "The Children" and "Twilight Sleep." She holds to the European 'double standard', which makes divorce unnecessary and to a morality somewhere between 'the age of innocence' and 'the age of abandon.' Since man is 'obsessed' anyway his wife should not interfere; a woman that breaks loose always pays for her revolt. Conversely, the dominating, moral wife is a social menace and a justification for the old solution. Nothing but domestic disaster can come of the 'single standard' and equal liberty for both sexes. Pauline in "Twilight Sleep" is an example of the woman who divorces her husband (Arthur) because of an affair with Cousin Eleanor.

1. Divorce

2. Cults

A familiar illustration of the writer's contempt for fads is this satire on the women's club type:

she was "one of the ladies who pursue culture in bands, as though it were dangerous to meet alone." (1) This sort of satire is undoubtedly clever; indeed it is a most enjoyable part of the author's work.

3. Money

Money, of course, is one thing constantly needed to regulate life, not for the sake of power but to achieve a cultured plane of living. Lewis Tarrant married Halo Spear (in "Hudson River Bracketed") with the tacit understanding that she supply family while he furnish wealth. At the same time, Mrs. Wharton is perfectly conscious of the money-grabbing European type bent on American gold, so that she entertains no foolish idea of fastening all the materialism in the world upon this country. Doubtless she has seen a good deal of the foreign greedy-man.

4. Crudity, Family and Honour

Crudity in the Wharton novels is always represented as coming from the West, that land of perpetually breezy freedom which is so in error from the Eastern point of view. Undoubtedly Mrs. Wharton thinks that the West will eventually recognize what older sections or countries have always assumed, namely, that untrammelled liberty is no liberty at all. Nonetheless, her books make it clear that established families of the Atlantic seaboard are frequently benefited by an infusion of hinterland stock, of plebeian vitality like Vance Weston in

(1) p. 104 Some Contemporary Americans Percy Holmes Boynton University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1924.

"Hudson River Bracketed." Always it is the family tradition, perhaps in the importance of protecting a woman's honour, or perhaps in the necessity of hiding scandal, but it is usually a central theme. Be it repeated that these themes are artfully handled, yet they make for commentary rather than significant interpretation. As they approach a formula, they catalogue the author as a variation of the problem novelist.

"Ethan Frome"

Although a novella, that masterpiece of Wharton technique, "Ethan Frome" (1911), cannot be omitted. The book has the characteristic 'frame' supplied by a young visitor to "Starkfield, Massachusetts," and "each of my chroniclers," the author says, (1) "contributes to the narrative just so much as he or she is capable of understanding of what, to them, is a complicated and mysterious case; and only the narrator of the tale has scope enough to see it all, to resolve it back into simplicity, and to put it in its rightful place among his larger categories.

"I make no claim for originality in following a method of which 'La Grande Bretêche' and 'The Ring and the Book' had set me a magnificent example; my one merit is, perhaps, to have guessed that the proceeding there employed was also applicable to my small tale."

(1) p. ix Introduction to Modern Students Library Edition (1922) of Ethan Frome.

Throughout most of Mrs. Wharton's writing it is perfectly apparent that one is reading the product of a skilled craftsman. In particular, "Ethan Frome" carries the story along upon unusually effective waves of advancing and receding action to an excellent crux or focus in the tragedy of defeated tragedy. Ethan had apparently married Zeena from a sense of duty. Shortly thereafter she became a chronic fault-finder and a mental invalid, so that when a poor but attractively distant relation, Mattie Silver, entered into the Frome household, the love problem became acute. As the tale unfolds itself, it appears that Mattie and Ethan attempted suicide in a toboggan ride, that Mattie was only crippled, and that Ethan was forced to live out his days with two broken women. This is "the outcropping granite" (1) of New England that in 1911 had been consistently overlooked. The sectional code forbade a mistress; poverty prevented flight. In other words, the single standard and the dominating wife were again at fault. Assuredly the author has produced a perfect model for the novella, in this definitely limited range so carefully framed to focus pointedly like the short story. Unfortunately a writer of Mrs. Wharton's background, unless a positive "genius," would lay the characters on New England tradition just as she does, without actually catching their inner feeling.

(1) p. v ibid.

One bit of stage property looms up unmistakably: the pickle dish broken on page 91 (1). Of course Zeena is bound to discover it and the reader can restrain his patience with difficulty until she says on page 137, "I want to know who done this." However, the book is very well done and quite properly treated in any study of the novel to show fringes of development. (The subject will require mention later from another standpoint.) (2)

Conclusion

Sure-footed plots rather than action characterize Mrs. Wharton's work. Neo-classic subplots, neo-classic, unchanging human nature (in the too strict sense,) rather static characters and obvious character-patterns comprise the rest of the criticism. Wilson Follett (3), after mentioning Henry James's remark about "the masculine conclusion tending ... to crown the feminine observation," observes that Edith Wharton may be "superficially masculine" but that she is more nearly sexless. In short, there is about her writing an aloofness that arises not from artistic detachment but from an absence of vitality, as though she were a "dea ex machina" smugly contemplating the perfect working of her literary gadgets. She can offer this kind of pabulum (anent French burghers); "They had each

(1) ibid.
(2) pp.121 and 149 (2)
(3) pp. 291-292 Some Modern Novelists Wilson Follett Henry Holt N.Y. 1918.

their established niche in life... and this admirable fitting into the pattern, which seems almost as if it were a moral outcome of the universal French sense of form, has led the race to the happy, the momentous discovery that good manners are a short cut to one's goal, that they lubricate the wheels of life instead of obstructing them." (1) But Mrs. Wharton can do no more than represent the day before yesterday in the mechanical perfection of her technique, subject, and attitude toward life. What excellence she has will not save her from the footnotes of tomorrow, where a star may indicate, "author of 'Ethan Frome'."

VI. Through the War to the "Lost Generation."

A. Preface

The problem novelists just discussed have looked "at" American life and tried to analyze difficulties in the abstract. Herrick, Poole, and Edman show penetration but they never quite escape from the appearance of retailing second-hand observation. There is another type of writer in "the age of growing disillusion" (2) that is far more a part of the life about him, far more the thing itself than any imitation could ever be. This circumstance has not necessarily led to better art, still, it has made it possible to lay one's finger on "the very pulse of the machine." The reference here is

(1) p.28 A Motor Flight Through France Edith Wharton (1908) but there has been no change.
(2) p. 181 Pattee op.cit.

to Theodore Dreiser and Sherwood Anderson. These men are precedent and authority for many young writers springing into prominence after the War. They personify the deep current of American disillusion that flowed on from 1890. The World War stemmed it for a moment, only to heighten the flood with an auxiliary wave of abandoned standards. Then came Sinclair Lewis and Mencken. By the 1920's the great tidal wave was ready to engulf a "lost generation."

(1) Theodore Dreiser (1871 -) (1)

The Difficulty

The chief problem in criticizing Dreiser's work is that of weeding away superfluous material and of allowing for the over-emphasis due to critical strife. Although he had but three novels to his credit in 1913, he wrote autobiography at forty, (2) and subsequently a large number of self-revelatory books.

Life

Dreiser's life embraces Terra Haute, Warsaw (Indiana,) Chicago, Pittsburgh, St. Louis and New York. Much of his point of view derives from hard-boiled journalistic influences in these last-named cities. His early years knew poverty, repression, and the 'over-compensation' necessary to the thirteenth child in an unhappy immigrant family. The parents were German Catholic and this is the author's description of his

(1) pp. 180-193 Pattee op.cit.
(2) A Traveler at Forty 1913.

father (1):

Father

"I never knew a narrower, more hide-bound religionist, nor one more tender and loving in his narrow way. He was a crank, a tenth-rate Saint-Simon or Francis of Assisi, and yet a charming person if it had been possible to get his mind off the subject of religion for more than three seconds at a time. He worked, ate, prayed, slept and dreamed religion. With no other thought than the sanctity and glory and joy of the Catholic Church, he was constantly attempting to drive a decidedly recalcitrant family into a similar point of view." Then narrow religious training is not peculiar to the Puritan home! The author's attitude toward such rigid faith is brought out in the satiric passages of "An American Tragedy" directed against the Salvation Army. (2)

Mother

His mother was "a pagan...taken over into the Catholic Church at marriage, because she loved a Catholic and would follow her love anywhere. A great poet mother, because she loved fables and fairies and half believed in them, and once saw the Virgin Mary standing in our garden, and was sure it was she...an open, uneducated, wondering, dreamy mind." (3) It is easy to see how the young Dreiser deserted his father's standard, obtained a smattering of education, yet remained a confused peasant-

(1) p. 183 Pattee op.cit.
(2) First two chapters
(3) p. 183 Pattee op.cit.

mind, sincerely seeking beauty in the same limited fashion of his mother.

After journalism he turned to Street & Smith hack-work. In 1905 and 1906 the author of "Carrie" was busy making two dime novels for one by cutting originals in half and supplying new ends or beginnings. For the man's artistic benefit, this exercise should have been reversed, since over-expansion is one of his major faults. Editorial work on magazines like "Delineator" and "Designer" followed until 1912, when a new edition of "Carrie," and "The Financier" brought sufficient income to permit purely literary activity.

Philosophy (1)

Dreiser's naturalistic philosophy fits hand in glove with the science of Ernst Haeckel, the trinity of unity, flux and chance, rather than Spencerian unity, growth and purpose. (2) The following quotation gives an early view of life presented in "Sister Carrie"(3):

Youthful View

"Among the forces which sweep and play throughout the universe, untutored man is but a wisp in the wind. Our civilization is still in the middle stage, scarcely beast, in that it is no longer wholly guided by instinct; scarcely human, in that it is not yet wholly guided by reason. On the tiger no responsibility rests. We see him aligned by nature with the forces of

(1) p. 279 Forum LXXXII No. 5 "What I Believe" Theodore Dreiser
(2) p. 202 Parrington op.cit.
(3) p. 84 Horace Liveright N.Y. 1930 edition.

life-- he is borne into their keeping and without thought he is protected. We see man far removed from the lairs of the jungles, his innate instincts dulled by too near an approach to free-will, his free-will not sufficiently developed to replace his instincts and afford him perfect guidance. He is becoming too wise to harken always to instincts and desires; he is too weak to always prevail against them. As a beast, the forces of life aligned him with them; as a man, he has not yet wholly learned to align himself with the forces. In this intermediate stage he wavers (1) -- neither drawn in harmony with nature by his instincts nor yet wisely putting himself into harmony by his own free-will. He is even as a wisp in the wind, moved by every breath of passion, acting now by his free-will and now by his instincts, erring with one, only to retrieve by the other, falling by one, only to rise by the other - a creature of incalculable variability. We have the consolation of knowing that evolution is ever in action, that the ideal is a light that cannot fail. (The following sounds like Spencer but Dreiser forgets it in later life.) He will not forever balance thus between good and evil. When this jangle of free-will and instincts have been adjusted, when perfect understanding has given the former the power to replace the latter entirely, man will no longer vary. The needle of understanding will yet point steadfast and unwavering

(1) Underscoring by student

to the distant pole of truth."

Here one finds almost all of Dreiser's attitude toward life. Here is the questing after truth and the characteristic portrayal of man as "a wisp in the wind." Early romantic hope suggests a Spencerian evolution in which the great purpose is eventually to be accomplished - reason triumphs over instinct so that man is no longer between the traditional devil and the deep blue sea. It is an early point of view, however, not in keeping with his growing sense of overwhelming fate (environmental, "bio-chemical" etc.) developed in later years. The shallowness of such thinking becomes apparent as one recalls that the nineteenth century confused scientific progress with the possibility of similar advance in human nature. Dreiser merely differentiates somewhat loosely between the rational type able to achieve self-discipline and the instinctive child of nature. He assumes, in an Utopian way, that these two types and the intermediate possibilities will eventually be represented only by the highest, thereby giving the lie to thousands of past years in which the relative percentages of these groups has been about the same. Insofar as he understands the majority of persons in this world to be motivated by ignorance, instinct, environment, or anything but rational exercise of free-will, Dreiser is perfectly right. He follows, however, the extreme Darrow-Lindsay school in holding that society is the real criminal. (1)

(1) Clyde Griffiths in An American Tragedy

and seeks humanitarian, external reform, and he does not realize that, although sub-rational persons form the greater part of humanity, they are not fit subjects for literature, or at least, they are not fit major characters.

Effect of Philosophy On Characters

Such characters as the naturalist usually chooses to prove what should be an already conceded point are the familiar case-histories of the psychologist, unrelieved by the dramatic value of intelligent free-will at conflict. For Dreiser this means simply the "morbid interpretation of pathological types," saved only, as it happens, by the author's "gesture of pity" (1) toward betrayor and betrayed (2). It is a commonplace to remark that behaviourism is a foe to character, that the more successful the method the more the effect is destroyed. Frank Cowperwood and Eugene Witla are all but monstrosities of lust and greed, the former "comes from the same zoo as most of the heroes of Jack London" (3), and uses jungle ethics for wealth and power; "by and large, the financial type is the coldest, the most selfish, and the most useful of all living phenomena." (4) But what is there left after the superlative has been several times repeated? In "'The Genius'," Angela is a straight naturalistic, case-history of pregnancy

(1) p. 69 A Book of Prefaces H. L. Mencken Fifth Edition
(2) The Hand of the Potter (Play)
(3) p. 106 The American Novel Today Regis Michaud
(4) p. 74 Hey-Rub-A-Dub-Dub Theodore Dreiser

told in a medical fashion totally removed from the usual sense of Dreiserian pity, while Susan Dane represents the society level which it is impossible for the author to attain in real life. Poor Roberta Alden, again, is defeated before she starts and Clyde Griffiths seeks superficial goals among the swells simply because, like his Creator, he has never had clothes, 'pretty gals,' and the generally more 'desirable' things in the world. No one is amazed when a child wants candy, yet such a wish of itself can hardly prove very interesting. Carrie got what she wanted; as a result Hurstwood's fall is the only praiseworthy part of the book, a sketch admirably done. (1) Jenny Gerhardt, a re-worked Carrie, is very appealing for her brave calm in a situation before which she is helpless. Difficult though it is for Dreiser's poverty-stricken imagination to enter into the female spirit, he has achieved in Jenny the best character that could be drawn from his point of view. Unfortunately for George Hurstwood, he is hidden away in a very badly written book. These two persons show Dreiser at his best and they bring their author a praise deserved more for his valiant effort to create others like them than for his actual accomplishment.

Innocence

At heart, of course, the man is a constant Sunday School moralizer with a different code. He

(1) "one of the triumphs of fiction" p. 58 American and British Literature Since 1890 C. & M. VanDoren Century N.Y. 1925.

explains everything in endless asides and pesters his reader with all manner of child-like comment. This is because "the thoughts that come to other men by way of books he discovered hardly for himself comparatively late in life, but he remains unaware that they have been long been current among folk who could absorb them at second-hand." (1)

Sex

On the subject of sex, Dreiser shows, as he plainly states elsewhere, that he knows not his mind. In "Neurotic America and the Sex Impulse" (2) Freud has obviously brought him to the concession that this is the all but dominant force in man. He concludes that sex is at the bottom of almost all great work, etc. (3) Yet in "'The Genius'" what should, according to the Dreiserian view, be a wholesome lack of restraint, becomes as disastrous as repression. Love quite naturally appears as merely the 'blood mood' of sex.

The Confused Mind

Pattee makes this somewhat too broad indictment; "...greatest of all his failings, he lacks convictions, and without convictions there can be no greatness, no permanence in art." (3) He goes on to say, "we demand leadership of our literary men, positiveness, clearness of vision, a point of view." Undoubtedly the objection is valid to the extent that Theodore Dreiser has no business putting down a great over-flow as his own; it ought

(1) p. 128 Hey-Rub-A-Dub-Dub
(2) p. 134 ibid.
(3) p. 191 Pattee op.cit.

to be used by the various characters for their own illumination. Pattee uses such a quotation to substantiate his views: "I accept no creeds. I do not know what truth is, what beauty is, what love is, what hope is. I do not believe any one absolutely, and I do not doubt any one absolutely. I think people are both evil and well intentioned." (1) Well enough, this should be a dialogue out of a novel; it is not of interest concerning an author already on record many times over, yet such confusion is not necessarily a bar to good art, nor is it necessarily "the peasant's confusion in the face of complexity," (2) although the sub-title to "Hey-Rub-a-Dub-Dub" certainly clinches the matter in Pattee's favor. This reads, "A Book of the Mystery and Terror and Wonder of Life."

The Unimaginative and the Untrained

Dreiser in reality is no materialist. However, because he is uneducated and uncultivated, his quest for the vitally significant spirit behind the reality ends more often than not in coarse failure. In speaking of education he will hold forth in this manner: "Aside from giving one a method of making a living, some little sense of past and present, or making the shifting scene more endurable ... education is really fantastic and points more clearly to the intelligibility of matter and of matter in its relation to the whole universe than almost anything else I know." (3)

(1) ibid.
(2) ibid.
(3) p. 589 Dawn 1931 Edition. Theodore Dreiser

The Imaginative and the Dreamy

On the other hand, he will advance the Cabell dream-escape like this: "Dream on. Believe. Perhaps it is unwise, foolish, child-like, but dream anyhow. Disillusionment is destined to appear. You may vanish as have other great dreams, but even so, what a glorious, and imperishable memory! ... Of dreams and the memory of them life is compounded." (1)

Mature View

As has been observed, Dreiser's view of life laid down in "Sister Carrie" contained many Spencerian stanzas. Yet this is the attitude which most properly characterizes the man's work and which emphasizes Haeckel's flux and chance: "I find life to be not only a complete illusion or mirage which changes and so escapes or eludes one at every point, but the most amazing fanfare of purely temporary and always-changing and ever-vanishing and, in the main, clownish and ever-ridiculous interests which concern at best the maintenance here of innumerable selfish, self-centered, and cruel organisms whose single and especial business it is to exist each at the expense of the other -- no more and no less." (2) Aside from these rather advanced ideas, Dreiser is like that average American of recent times which he unconsciously describes with great accuracy in "A Hoosier Holiday." (3)

(1) p. 92 Michaud op.cit.
(2) p. 280 Forum LXXXII No. 5 (November 1929 "What I Believe" Theodore Dreiser.
(3) pp.93-94 Michaud op.cit. quoted at length.

Faults

In Dreiserian themes power and lust recur with amazing monotony. To say that "he can handle a canvas as broad as Balzac's" (1) is absurd. "The vogue of the long and amorphous novel" (2) carries Dreiser along like a "wisp in the wind." The beginning, the ending, the contents are as much a matter of chance as the destinies of the characters. The author's narrative is at the mercy of his own prolixity. Not content with documentation, he rushes forth to explain the documentation without the slightest "pity" for the betrayed reader. A newspaper editor once gave him the following advice: "Get in all the touches of local color you can. And remember Zola and Balzac, my boy, remember Zola and Balzac. Bare facts are what are needed in cases like this, with lots of color as to the scenery or atmosphere, the room, the other people, the street, and all that. You get me?" (3) Unfortunately young Theodore did. He set about his novel with all the sdemnity of a German barber trimming a beard. (4) This sincerity proved the basis of whatever appeal he has, for there must be some compensation in an author who could write these sentences without a smile -- "Lester sat down in great comfort amid the splendors of the great Louis Quinze dining room. (James Branch Cabell would apologize

(1) As does Pattee on p. 190 op.cit.
(2) p. 109 C.C. Baldwin op.cit.
(3) p. 185 Pattee op.cit.
(4) p. 79 H.L. Mencken op.cit.

for two 'greats' in the single chapter!) He liked this homey home atmosphere." (1) Dreiser's 'style' is "just awful" and it is not necessary to inquire just how awful it is. If his books survive despite stylistic and other horrors, the millenium will be close at hand. When Dreiser left literature for economy in "Tragic America" (1925), he fared even worse. "In the fall of that year ... he made his bow as an economist. Critics everywhere rejected his statistics as incorrect, denounced his observations as imbecile, and generally questioned the truth of his conclusions. If this book had been written now, I am sure 'The American Spectator' would have, in all probability, selected it as 'the worst book of the month'." (2)

Appraisal

T. K. Whipple has an estimate of Dreiser that strikes very near home and answers admirably as a final appraisal of the real "American Tragedy" in our literature. He says (3), "The importance of Theodore Dreiser as a writer is chiefly historical... Such men (as Charles Brockton Brown and Edmund Waller) usually excel in some one particular: They introduce a perfect trick of style; they exploit a new province of human life; they develop an odd unknown mode of feeling. But shortly their specialty is mastered by other writers,

(1)
(2) p. 4 The American Spectator Jan. 1933 "The Editors": An Appraisal" by Matthew Marmor. A 'smart' criticism but essentially correct.
(3) p. 70 Spokesman T.K. Whipple. p. 81 for last paragraph.

by men perhaps of less originality, but of solider and better-rounded talent; and save by the historian of literature the partial and incomplete work of the pioneer is forgotten.

"So it must be, I think, with Dreiser ...

"To understand the ardent championship which Dreiser has received, one must mentally place him in theperiod of his first work, remembering that 'Sister Carrie' appeared in 1900 and 'Jennie Gerhardt' in 1911, and that among the favourite and most typical novels of the time were 'When Knighthood Was In Flower,' 'Graustark,' and 'Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm.' No wonder Dreiser was welcomed by the enlightened few. At least, he meant well ... and ever since they have been writing about Dreiser as if this were still the early Roosevelt period. They have busied themselves with defending his conception of the purpose and nature of fiction, not with weighing his actual achievement."

(2) Sherwood Anderson (1),
a "Corn-Fed Mystic" (2) (1876 -)

"The Spoon River Anthology" (1915) and Freud furnish method and material for Sherwood Anderson. He is both a cause and a result of modern literary trends. In the field of the novel there is little to be said in his favor, but as an influence upon the 1920's his importance is considerable. From Frank Norris to "The Lost Generation" there is but one main naturalistic road to follow; Dreiser, Masters and Anderson are about the only ones to be met along the way. These men cannot tell the traveller in quest of truth which way to go. They don't know, yet none could be more sincere in their eager search for the right path.

Life

Anderson was born in Camden, Ohio, in a "Poor White" background. His father, ex-soldier and harness-maker, is frequently portrayed in "A Story-Teller's Story," "Windy McPherson's Son" and "Tar," an introspective sort of autobiography. As is so frequently the case with the naturalist, everything about Anderson's life must be told. This tendency in individual writers toward self-examination finds its national counterpart (particularly after the psychology fad) in America's unusual effort to understand herself. Young Anderson found his realistic material as stable-boy, mechanic's apprentice, factory-hand,

(1) pp. 32-38 Pattee op.cit.
(2) p. 110 Mid-West Portraits: A Book of Memories and Friendships Harry Hansen Harcourt Brace N.Y. 1923.

advertising agent, and what-not. The Spanish-American War, of course, helped to hasten disillusion. Later came the call to literature.

Confusion's Priest

In this field Sherwood Anderson stands forth as high priest to the cult of confusion, but his was the only available leadership after the War. Principally his concern was with the frustration brought on by a machine-ridden age. Frustration makes the individual seek escape only to find that escape itself is a blind alley. Short stories like "Caught" (1) and "Broken" (2) exemplify it. "Having no god," he says of himself, "The gods have been taken from me by the life about me." (3) He is the Freudian dreamer using himself as a laboratory, particularly after the publication of "Poor White" in 1920. Anderson was indeed 'caught in the trap' and only recently has he been able to find any comfort in nibbling at the cheese. In "Cotton Mill" (short story) (4) he leans toward a more wholesome emphasis upon enduring humanness in connection with the machine and departs somewhat from the earlier concern with its warping effect. There he says, "I am protesting against an unbalanced view of modern industrial life. I protest against the point of view that sees nothing in the small town but Rotarians and Boosters (many were anti-Lewis by 1930), that sees nothing in industry but devils and martyrs, that does not see people as people, realizing that we are all

(1) American Mercury Feb. 1924, I:165-76
(2) Century May 1925, II0:3-14
(3) p. 333 Pattee op.cit.
(4) p. 10 Scribner's July 1930 LXXXVIII No. 1

caught in a strange new kind of life." This strikes a far better note and takes the most tenable position in the proletarian line.

Philosophic Primitivism, etc.

But when Anderson was at the height of his influence in preaching escape from machine, narrow environment, and repression, he relied heavily upon philosophic primitivism, counselling folk to cast off sophistication and regain their lost pioneering vigour. "It may sound childish, but men will have to go back to nature more." (1) Apparently he felt that "the super-incumbent weight of civilization had grown too heavy," that "futurism" was the thing, along with kindred other fatuities. The intellect was rejected as a foe to life, for "What makes you want to read about life? What makes people want to think about life? Why don't they live? Why don't they leave books and thoughts and schools alone? ... American men and women have not learned to be clean and noble and natural, like their forests and their wide clean plains." (2) This type of plea might well express a passing mood, yet here it is advanced in all seriousness without necessary qualification as a philosophy of life. There is the distinct odour of nature - mystic - Whitman about it. The subjective intensity of "Mid-American Chants" (1918) is without doubt derivative from "Leaves

(1) p.618 Scribner's December 1930
(2) p. 134 Spokesman T. K. Whipple

of Grass." So is the vatic concept of the poet. On the other hand, one may not under-estimate the man's absolute sincerity and idealism in advocating free-love as an approach to the finer, larger, expression of life. It represents idealism upon an irreproachably beautiful plane, at least equal to Keat's truth and beauty. Another important salvation for Anderson lies in the soul-healing power of handicraft well done: Hugh McVey in "Poor White" does some wholesome harness-making just as did Anderson's father; "Many Marriages" and "Dark Laughter" contain craftsmen who "are willing to suffer for the sake of their high aim: --- this the author calls 'craft love'." (1)

Symbolism

The fore-going philosophy is generally symbolized as follows: (2)

river = life

field = freedom

nakedness = freedom, as from repression

house = repression

negro music = free, instinctive expression.

All of which is rather obvious and limited.

Technique

In technique, Anderson has made some interesting contributions to literature. Particularly in "Tar," he has developed a "timeless" narrative method

(1) p. 113 Harry Hansen op.cit.
(2) As in Dark Laughter

that is psychology without chronology. The action in that book takes place between the ages of about six and fourteen years, but as in youth, days simply go by without any especial chronological connection. Such a narrative method may prove very useful, although as yet it has been so closely connected with the confused style that no adequate appraisal of its possibilities can be made. Anderson's hypnotic rhythm has an appealing earnestness about it that produces an excellent result for a paragraph or two. Prolonged, the effect is lost and the entire thing appears to be irritating sing-song, "the cult of vertigo." Possibly the tempo comes from the machine itself as Anderson suggests: "See that workman there. He is fitting all the movements of his young body to the rapid, jerky movements of that machine. I would like to write prose like that ... I would like to make it dance with the machine." (1) The cadence is somewhat like novelized free-verse. Anderson slows down the tempo whereas Lewis speeds it up. Any random example will do:

"He sat at the table eating the food Katherine had prepared. Outside the house the sun was shining. It was only a little after two o'clock and the afternoon and evening were before him." (2) But Anderson overdoes it. The short sentence, the repeated

(1) p. 1 Scribner's July 1930 "Cotton Mill"
(2) p. 32 Many Marriages (3rd printing)

'and' seem to get hold of a writer 'and' he cannot shake them off. Hemingway follows this model and makes the same mistake. There, too, it is good in a restrained use.

Of course Anderson, as a psychologic naturalist, goes in heavily for sub-conscious-half-conscious-'stream-of-consciousness' style. Again, one laments that it is overdone. A carefully-chosen paragraph here and there is splendid, but no, they must always make a book of it. This fault may lead to something very much like a virtue, that is to say, a confused style is best adapted to a confused story. That two wrongs should make a right, however, seems dubious. The safest guide is proportion.

Vernacular

Pattee explains Anderson's attitude toward diction and the vernacular in a way that recalls Norris: "He (Anderson) would record the actualities of life as he knew them, he would hold up his mirror and reflect life unrevised, undiminished. If it was shocking, so much the worse for life. He knew how men talked, he had heard stories by the hour told by advertising agents in his office, by hired men on farms and in shops, by young soldier bucks in tents and latrines. That was actuality, that to him was Truth: it devolved upon him simply to record it." (1) An inadequate theory, yes,

(1) p. 335 Pattee op.cit.

yet one that fares better than might be expected when put into practice. It recalls Robert Frost's 'colloquial rhythms'. The vernacular, always purposely used, is decidedly bettered by Anderson's style, raised to a level above the common-place, although left close to the simplicity of ordinary, Wordsworthian speech. "And if we are a crude and childlike people how can our literature hope to escape the influence of that fact? Why indeed should we want to escape?" (1) "Writing in America, he feels, deals entirely with exteriors," (2) so that "Truth and honesty is what we need most." (3)

Novels

Neither "Dark Laughter" (1925) nor "Many Marriages" (1922) amounts to a great deal. In the first novel, Bruce Dudley drifts down the Mississippi River and realizes that the stevedores can laugh their rich, dark laughter because they are not repressed. Dudley had been in a wheel factory and had escaped from a dominating wife of the Wharton variety. Fred Grey represents the devitalized fellow who is decent, busy, repressed, and "igitur" incomplete. Consequently his wife does not love him but desires Dudley, whom she sees one day at work. Apparently he takes kindly to Aline because, when she advertises for a gardener, who should arrive but Dudley. (This illustrates the kind of improbability that results when the naturalist goes out-

(1) p. 122 T.K. Whipple op.cit.
(2) and (3) pp. 113 - 164 Harry Hansen op.cit.

side the sphere of his own immediate experience.) Anderson thinks "Many Marriages" the best of his work, (1) doubtless because it contains so much autobiographical material. Like John Webster, he had been a manufacturer and had stood at the door of his own factory to take stock of life and all it contained.

"He was trying to apply his philosophy that life is not a mean thing to be tamed and held to hard and fast cannons but a beautiful, wild thing of ecstasies and dreams, something that must be lived deeply to be understood." (2) All Anderson's characters work out the previously-outlined ideas in a rather obvious way, throughout novels of little merit. The author's unusual sense of the value of seemingly unimportant lives (3), indeed his whole literary ability makes itself more manifest in forms other than the novel, a circumstance accounting for the scant attention paid "Dark Laughter" and "Many Marriages."

Appraisal

"Such men," holds Pattee, "build no foundations. They stir the waters to a muddiness but do nothing permanent." (4) This judgment is unfair to Anderson's technical experimentation. Furthermore, though his novels are dead, he should always be sought in short story or semi-autobiography for the sake of

(1) p. 118 Harry Hansen op.cit.
(2) p. 117 ibid.
(3) As in Winesburg, Ohio
(4) p. 337 Pattee op.cit.

his sincerity and passionate appreciation of human life.

(3) Sinclair Lewis (1885 -)

Sinclair Lewis presents an entirely different attitude toward the American scene, but an attitude no less typical of another aspect of the post-War mind. This attitude is best expressed by the term, "Smart Set," a blanket to cover Mencken, Nathan, Cabell, Hergesheimer, Lewis, and God. The group is older than "The Lost Generation," yet in spirit closely allied to it. Babbitt-baiting was the major sport for these worthies, and most critics grant that they perform a necessary if somewhat over-estimated service. A line will indicate their style: "They laid Jessie James in his grave and Dante Gabriel Rossetti died immediately." (1) As a spiritual member of this group, Sinclair Lewis recorded the impressions of a cantankerous hick.

The Smart Set

Life

This is an outline of his life (2): He was a prairie American in Sauk Centre, Minnesota, for the first eighteen years. (The "Main Street" background is supplied.) His father was a physician like Kennicott (3) and probably supplied material for this character and in part for Arrowsmith. Lewis regards his boyhood as "the eternal aching comedy of expectant

(1) opening sentence of The Mauve Decade Thomas Beer, A. A. Knopf N.Y. 1926
(2) pp. 338-345 Pattee op.cit.
(3) In Main Street

youth," (1) a view more in accord with the superficial Tarkington than the penetrative Cather.

After graduation from Yale in 1907, Lewis says, "I was literary jack-of-all-trades; newspaper reporter on the New Haven 'Courier and Journal,' San Francisco 'Bulletin,' and for the Associated Press; magazine editor - 'Trans-atlantic Tales,' 'Volta Review,' 'Adventure,' Publishers' Co. and George Doran Co. I wandered down to Panama, going steerage, returning stowaway, and in between failing to get a job on the Panama Railroad. A year and a half I spent in California, part of it reporting, part trying (vainly) to 'free lance,' sharing a bungalow at Carmel with William Rose Benét. And once Allan Updegraff and I shared miserable rooms on the East Side of New York." (2) Then there was the Helicon Hall experiment with Upton Sinclair and all sorts of vagabondage over Europe, twenty-six of the United States and Mexico. From the home tour came Lewis's timely "Free-Air" (1919.) His early work in "Our Mr. Wrenn" (1914), "The Trail of the Hawk" (1915), "The Job" (1917) is pure pot-boiling, notable only for the presence of some early experiment in photographic realism.

Mr. Lewis

Lewis is typically American in the worst sense. He is proud of our crudity because it implies

(1) p. 338 Pattee op.cit.
(2) pp. 225-226 C.C. Baldwin op.cit.

virility; he is a great practical joker. His smart-aleck attitude is shown by the well-known story of his behaviour at a class reunion. (1) Asked as the principal speaker for dinner at a time when his reputation was secure, he accepted, only to arrive in mufti and inform his class mates that, since they had never paid any attention to him while he was in college, he would now have nothing to do with them. Then he got up from the table and left his comrades before the soup was served. Naturally he has been highly

1930 approved abroad. "The Nobel prize in literature (was) awarded to Sinclair Lewis for his powerful and vivid art of description, and his ability to use wit and humour in the creation of original characters." (2) These claims for his literature are interesting to examine. As for the man, he himself is Babbitt, with enough objectivity to betray his own kind.

Philosophy Philosophically, Lewis represents "negation cannonized as the one positive virtue," (3) and so typifies the post-War collapse. Even "Arrowsmith," a satire on medical fakirs and illusions, but more particularly a plea for pure science, the only ideal left to America 1925, ends with this dialogue: "'I feel as

(1) The student has been unable to authenticate this popular word-of-mouth tale.
(2) p. 345 Pattee op.cit.
(3) p. 140 Regis Michaud op.cit.

if I were really beginning to work now,' said Martin. 'This new quinine stuff may prove pretty good. We'll play along on it for two or three years, and maybe we'll get something permanent -- and probably we'll fail!'" That is the conclusion of one of Lewis's best books. Futilitarianism, where it does not lapse positively into the Faulkner cult of cruelty, marks almost all the representative work of the twenties. Lieutenant Henry in "A Farewell to Arms" ends up the same way: "After a while I went out and left the hospital and walked back to the hotel in the rain." (1) The student has been told that Vicki Baum's "Grand Hotel" sounds a final, frustrated 'life-goes-on' keynote, too. Only a dismal sense of continual flux was left to the "modern" of the period.

Influence of Journalism : American origin.

Sinclair Lewis furnishes the best illustration of how journalism has hindered the cause of American letters. Thomas Beer, in speaking of Stephen Crane about the time of his death, suggests the beginning of this journalistic tradition (2). He says, "Another romantic movement was afoot: the romance of journalism as the school of letters was well established now, and the delusion brought boys scurrying into the offices of the New York papers in droves. Had not Richard Harding Davis, Julian Ralph, Edward Townsend and, more

(1) Closing line
(2) p. 71 Stephen Crane by Thomas Beer

brilliantly still, Rudyard Kipling emerged from that battering apprenticeship? So journalism took hold of the national fiction and for a decade fiercely attuned it to the key of commonplace perceptions and to the flattery of an inferior city." The theory was that since art was an imitation of life, the potential author must see and know life before writing, and what better training for the purpose than newspaper experience? It is merely the over-emphasis upon sensation, again. Most of the objections to this approach are found in Lewis.

Journalistic Shortcomings

(a) Interpretation

The ability to record facts by no means assures an even passable interpretation of them. When the reporter returns to his office, he knows "Who? What? When? Where? Why?" perhaps, but the interpretation of these facts is generally passed on to a 'headliner,' whose opinion in turn is not guided by the significant, only by what will please the public. Consequently a journalist evolves a philosophy of indifference. Facts themselves become meaningless. Lewis just piles them on and seems to say, "Just look at those! and those! Aren't they awful?" He usually over-writes this material fifty percent (1).and then gets out shears and paste. But in his episodic mental-photograph narratives, it makes little difference where the beginning or end occurs. Dreiser was overwhelmed by the same bulk, but he never developed the ability to cut.

(1) "The Repatriated Lewis" W. A. Macdonald, Boston Transcript, March 7, 1931.

(b) Opportunism

The training of the journalist is to seize upon the timely, no matter how transient such interest may be. Indeed the writing of "Babbitt" required less ability than it took to determine the optimum publication date. Excessive use of the vernacular is another phase of Lewis's opportunism, although at the same time it is bound up with his mucker pose that "I'm not a literary gent." (1)

(c) Sensationalism

This writer carries along the sensational 'literature of exposure' that characterized the muck-raker of the first decade. In those early days sensation was used primarily for ethical or reform value. Gradually the public palate came to demand a thrill in literature for its own sake. Successive novels of Lewis have exposed the small town, the business man, the minister, the doctor, and now "Ann Vickers" treats the modern or business woman. Here then, is a definite muck-rake element adapted to current demands for excitement.

Motion picture technique was another way in which Lewis could accomplish his purpose -- "The driver of the wagon swaying through forest and swamp of the Ohio wilderness was a ragged girl of fourteen, etc., etc... That was the great-grandmother of Martin Arrowsmith." (2) The mental photograph was still another possibility, but non-selective photographic realism of course gives no proper imitation of life.

(1) Boston Transcript op. cit.
(2) p. 1 Arrowsmith

Sometimes it is quite obvious that Lewis is trying to say, "Dis ain't literature, bud, dis is real stuff," and a serious distortion results. Dr. Haven Emerson (1) makes the following statement in reviewing "Arrowsmith": "The satire is stinging, deserved perhaps. Yet like so many of the misbegotten daubs offered by painters as interpretations of their own distorted emotions and crude mentalities, what might have been a rare realistic novel has suffered from the same lack of proportion and excursions into extravaganza that make of the daily press a school of literary pathology." In this book every effort is made to achieve reality through specialized medical lingo. There are many instances of the monotonous result (2). To Dr. Paul H. De Krief, according to the preface, the author is greatly in debt. Since this gentleman no longer enjoys a reputable standing in his profession, the inference is that much of the material was, if entirely sound, at least somewhat sensationally trumped up. Such considerations are really unimportant; it is the impression made by the method that should be judged.

Lewis has devised a very modern American tempo timed to cinematographic speed. Even tabloid "readers" can follow it without undue strain. The following example will also illustrate how cleverly the author runs together his vernacular style and

(1) p. 180 Survey 54: 180 (may 1, 1925)
(2) p. 257 Arrowsmith, 7th printing, August, 1925

the dialogue of characters: "They were buying their main tackle at Ijams Brothers', the Sporting Goods Mart, with the help of Willis Ijams, fellow member of the Boosters' Club. Babbitt was completely mad. He trumpeted and danced. He muttered to Paul 'Say, this is pretty good, eh?'" (1) Obviously Lewis's mimetic genius is of a high order, "of a sort that has hardly ever been transcended." (2) Almost any page of "Babbitt" furnishes ample evidence. But Lewis deals in set types and labels largely because his satire is directed against the generic specimen and not the individual. In other words, he is a caricaturist, which is all a blunt critic of mediocrity can be. A good deal of his work (3) is blood and thunder for the author thinks these qualities account for the greatness of literary masters. (4)

For the most part, Sinclair Lewis's work is monotonous; it may have value as the ideological record of a generation; none the less the author's permanent contribution remains in the two titles, "Babbitt" and "Main Street."

(1) p. 137 Babbitt 1st Grossett & Dunlap ed.
(2) p. 298 The Strange Necessity, Rebecca West.
(3) i. e. Mantrap or Elmer Gantry.
(4) p. 298 Rebecca West op. cit

VII. "The Lost Generation" Itself (1)

1. Characteristic Ideas of "These Sad Young Men" (2)

"The Lost Generation" comprises those young writers that were particularly influenced by the World War, either from actual combat or from the attendant collapse of moral values. Elizabeth Maddox Roberts is included because, although older, she began writing at the same time. The following names will indicate the group:

Ernest Hemingway
John Dos Passos
F. Scott Fitzgerald
Julian Green (writing in French)
Louis Bromfield
Floyd Dell
Ben Hecht
William Faulkner
Elizabeth Maddox Roberts
E. E. Cummings
Thomas Boyd

They are for the most part anti-New England (like Bromfield), anti-Puritan, anti-moral, and at best, 'disillusioned pessimists' of the youthful brand that has drunk life to the dreadful dregs. Dreiser, Anderson, and Lewis were their guides in this country. Abroad Joyce, Lawrence, Prophet of the Phallic Emblem, and Aldous Huxley, the irate chemist, led the revolt from nineteenth-century ideas.

The War was, to be sure, a wholly new experience for all participants; chiefly it shook up those older persons who had been reared on the Victorian

(1) A phrase of Gertrude Stein's: "You are all a Lost Generation," quoted from back of dedication page to The Sun Also Rises by Ernest Hemingway. Grossett & Dunlap ed.

(2) A Scott Fitzgerald title.

model. No one could point to anything stable after Wilsonian idealism had proved itself hollow. Few realized then that the war was merely an accentuation of an already active intellectual disorder and revolt. Breakdown seemed complete. The ones that went to France were irrevocably changed, they knew not how. The ones that remained at home, the ones that had sent the soldiers, were in no position to do ought but follow the leader. They could not question too closely the boys they had cheered so lustily at the waiting transports. Standards are usually lowered by war, but in this case the effect was staggering, due to parallel economic causes and the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment. Michaud believed that the pessimism of the younger generation in America was a good omen and an indication of a better future. (1) At any rate, the twenties were deeply coloured by it; proverbially American optimism and braggadocio were not to last to the present decade.

The cry for truth and freedom rose on all sides. All the younger writers were in revolt or else they were paralyzed by the doctrine of negation. In brief, the Victorian lid was off. The most obvious evidence of this fact was a perfect flood of sex novels. The war had killed the old problem novel vogue, yet under the Freudian banner writers treated sex in much the same

(1) p. XI op. cit. Régis Michaud

way. Here was the "problem" trumped up as "literature of exposure" might have been. Only the subject was changed, if one excludes some technical considerations.

A Flood of Characteristic Literature

"We begin with the suggestion that Don Juan leads an interesting life ('Jurgen', 1919); then we learn that there's a lot of sex around if we only knew it (Winesburg, Ohio,' 1920), that adolescents lead very amorous lives ('This side of Paradise', 1920), that there are a lot of neglected Anglo-Saxon words ('Ulysses', 1921), that older people don't always resist sudden temptations ('Cytherea', 1922), that girls are sometimes seduced without being ruined (Flaming Youth', 1922), that even rape often turns out well ('The Sheik', 1922), that glamorous English ladies are often promiscuous ('The Green Hat', 1924), that in fact they devote most of their time to it ('The Vortex', 1926), that it's a damn good thing too ('Lady Chatterly's Lover', 1928) and finally that there are abnormal variations ('The Wall of Loneliness', 1928, and 'Sodom and Gomorrhe', 1929).

"In my opinion the erotic element in these works, even in 'The Sheik' written for children in the key of 'Peter Rabbit', did not one particle of harm. Every thing they described, and much more, was familiar in our contemporary life. The majority of these theses were honest and elucidating - their effect was to restore some dignity to the male as opposed to the he-man

in American life." (1) This represents the matured opinion of one whose "Tales of the Jazz Age" (1922) gave the period one of its many names. F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote this obituary of the nineteen-twenties for Scribner's two years ago.

"The Limits of Obscenity"

The entire subject of obscenity has been competently summed up in an article entitled "The Limits of Obscenity" (2) "The Victorians denied the existence of sex; they (the moderns) deny the existence of anything else. The Victorians were prudes; they would, if they were permitted, write exclusively on lavatory paper... 'Noth ing too much', cried the Greeks. The Victorians read that as 'too much of nothing', but our contemporaries yodel, 'nothing can be too much'. And both are equally wrong." Which, indeed, was about the way of it in all that was done.

(2) Ernest Hemingway (1898 -)

"in our time"

One of the most interesting literary exhibits that "The Lost Generation" has to offer is Ernest Hemingway, more properly labelled "Left-Bank" Hemingway. A glance at the title-page of "In Our Time," first London edition, will reveal the striking originality of the man: it reads like this -

(1) pp. 401-462 "Echoes of the Jazz Age" by F. Scott Fitzgerald in Scribner's X C: 5 November, 1931.
(2) by Humbert Wolfe in Saturday Review of Literature May 7, 1932.

in our time

by

ernest hemingway

paris and london

1924

The book happened to be among the first of such typographical ingenuity and was obviously published for the "ultra" set abroad, with little thought to an American public. Then a native publisher bought the rights, destroyed certain bits of individuality and probably broke even. Hemingway's effort to disregard place unity by alternating in concomitant narrative the home and war backgrounds is noteworthy. The implication is that the brutality displayed by the central character in 1917 was really developed by earlier years in the West, in other words, that environment is again at fault. The narrative scheme works out rather well because the author has found some unity in the effect of two scenes upon one person, although many regard "in our time" as a series of short stories.

Sportsmanlike Cruelty and Emotion

Hemingway shared post-war futilitarianism for a long time. Had he continued, William Faulkner would not be the literary curiosity he is. A passage from "In Our Time" shows the trend to cruelty in the indifference toward sufferings[1] "'That's one for the medical journal, George,' he said. 'Doing a Caesarian with a jack-knife and sewing it up with nine-foot,

(1) p. 19 In Our Time 1st American

tapered gut leaders.'" Up until the publication of "A Farewell to Arms" (1929), war writers followed Barbusse's "Le Feu" thesis that war only brutalizes man. Then Hemingway brought forth the idea that at least passion mattered, escape-love patterned after Michael Arlen's grand passion. Heywood Broun announced that "A Farewell to Arms" (1) was "the greatest love-story ever written. Of course, Catherine Barclay and Lieutenant Henry display no real love whatsoever (except in the 'movie' version,) merely lust. This is what mars the story - they dare great things only to satisfy sensual desire. First-class love might well exist in the heart of a girl who did not want a child, but the matter resolves itself into the emotional experiences of two good sports, which recalls Hemingway's other escapes from reality.

Chief among these escapes stands the creed of the sportsman, reinvoked to meet war tragedy. The tradition is well represented in America, although in this country there is a new-world emphasis upon winning. Joseph Warren Beach quotes (2) the sentence, "nothing ever happens to the brave," and then points out that the only value left to Hemingway is pluck. He is bring-out out the same point, but he does not take time to indicate the origin of this attitude toward life. In Hemingway's treatment of the sportsman's creed, he

(1) Jacket puff
(2) p. 533 The Twentieth Century Novel

focuses more upon the English aspect, that of losing gracefully, particularly if the game be well played. Indeed his enthusiasm for sport is quite likely to obscure his deeper conviction that "life is like that," and lend undue prominence to the 'pluck' by-product. The creed as a whole is especially fitted to the soldier's needs, since it forbids the pessimist to express his pessimism, no matter how discouraging affairs become. Furthermore, it merges with the American lynching point of view that resorts to direct action when law fails, because it suggests "the manly thing to do." (1)

Other Escapes

The "Sun Also Rises" (1926) is filled with sportsmanlike cruelty derived from the War. Even the fishing trip supplies a taint of cruelty, or at least indifference to suffering. But fishing has not enough thrill for the war-torn; bull-fighting is really the author's favourite sport. Here the brutality of human and animal is always coming out. Enjoyment of this great vicarious thrill is a natural sequel to actual combat and the horrors attendant. From it is reflected the stock 'reaction' to the last war. The appearance of "Death in the Afternoon" (1932) was tantamount to an announcement of imaginative bankruptcy, since Hemingway made nothing of the book but a Spaulding's sport guide to bull-fighting decorated with realistic photographs

(1) Satirized by Cabell in Jurgen particularly.

Drinking

"Left-Bank" is also the creator of the "Everybody was drunk school of literature." (1) The frequency with which drink is mentioned results in a very monotonous effect. O. Henry in "The Fourth in Salvador" says at the start, "drink shall swell the theme and be set forth in abundance," (2) thereby beginning what was, up until Hemingway, "the most besotted tale in our literature." But in the more modern writer the result is sheer boredom for the reader, unrelieved by the customary pleasures of tippling. The themes of passion, drinking, bull-fighting, fishing and hunting plus a little pluck are the 'values' this member of "The Lost Generation" is able to salvage from the war-wreckage. Needless to say, his characters are all warped and inarticulate.

"Dirt"

The realism is rather naturalistic then psycho-real in the straightforwardness of treatment. Only absolute objectivity can be used with such subject matter as this: "A short time after he contracted gonorrhea from a salesgirl in a loop department store while riding in a taxicab through Lincoln Park." (3) Many competent critics have justly decided with Robert Herrick that this is merely dirt, (4) not because of any prudish objections to such passages but merely because the material has no significance. On the other hand, it

(1) In Our Time sentence 1, chap. 1
(2) p. 165 Pattee op.cit.
(3) p. 83 In Our Time
(4) "What Is Dirt" by Robert Herrick pp. 258-262, Bookman vol. 70 November 1929.

is well to recognize the possibility of effectiveness in similar incident more closely related to the futilitarian tone of a book, yet in what would normally be called filth: "'Would you like to use the bed-pan?'" 'I might try.' "They helped me and held me up but it was not any use. Afterward I lay and looked out the open doors onto the balcony." (1)

Now the first passage must be excluded because it is extraneous and unpleasant. It is the second that challenges most aesthetic theory. This instance, be it remembered, fits in perfectly with the adjacent text; there is no over-emphasis, merely the passing reference made in simple narrative form. It is difficult for the Anglo-Saxon, 'respectable' mind to perceive in a frustrated bowel movement any artistic worth. Yet the value is there just as much as though a shattered arm were used as a symbol of the helplessness caused by war; possibly it is heightened because the experience is more within the field of the commonplace. The significant achievement lies in the way the incident is handled. The reader is not asked to glorify an ordinary, bodily performance, which is what Whitman might have demanded, nor is he carefully steered around any such 'unmentionable.' If the matter be omitted entirely, the completeness of impression suffers; the sense of utter futility is lacking. While proportion

(1) pp. 92-93 Farewell to Arms 1929 Grosset & Dunlop edition.

and objectivity are observed, such treatment deserves a place in literature. Hemingway, despite his naturalism, has rendered Anglo-American art a service in showing how what is prudishly known as "filth" may find a place in keeping with taste and literary merit.

"The Cult of the Simple" (1)

Throughout this writer's realism there runs a vein of poor verisimilitude. He uses the dull catalogue of inconsequential events without any stress upon the significant. Of course, he is interested in amassing evidence of life's futility and is undoubtedly pursuing the method with purpose.

"I put the mail on the table, went back to the bedroom, undressed and had a shower. I was rubbing down when I heard the door-bell pull. I put on a bathrobe and slippers and went to the door. It was Brett." (2) Well, what of it? Doubtless he had to turn the door-knob, too, but some things may be taken for granted. This is the realistic recorder of life gone on a fact-cataloguing spree. These simple sentences, made up of words of one or two syllables for the most part, are strung along endlessly. Modifying clauses rarely appear, at most a compound "and" sentence, or the long paragraph closed by an end-sentence turned into an intellectual, red traffic light like, "The goats watched me dig." (3) Beach rightly regards all this as a highly conventionalized simplicity. The secret of its power,

(1) p. 530 The Twentieth Century Novel Joseph Warren Beach
(2) p. 55 The Sun Also Rises
(3) p. 115 ibid.

he says, is the record of fact marked by absolute omission of emotion. (1) It is a case of "plain words for plain things." (2) The style extends to the dialogue spoken by inarticulate moderns who are frequently abnormal. Brett is a nymphomaniac and Jake is sexually incapacitated by the war. These characters in "The Sun Also Rises" bring to mind William Faulkner's creation, "Pop-eye."

A Needless Concern

Hemingway shows an unfounded concern over the power of his realism. In the prefatory note to the Scribner edition of "A Farewell to Arms," there is the following "cave" to the reader - "In view of a recent tendency to identify characters in fiction with real people, it seems proper to state that there are no real people in this volume; both the characters and their names are fictitious. If the name of any living person has been used, the use was purely accidental." During the course (3) of the book he narrated (in admirably vivid fashion) the story of a Cooper escape from battle-police, which contains the traditional plunge into a fast flowing stream, the passing log to shield the swimmer from bullets, and every other requisite, improbable thriller under the sun. The venture is altogether the most far fetched thing of its kind outside of Beadle's Dime Novels. Consequently the prefatory warning displays an unusually innocent self-satisfaction.

(1) p. 537 J.W. Beach op.cit.
(2) p. 553 ibid.
(3) p. 238-241

Hemingway and his kin invariably leave one with an impression of delayed maturity.

(3) William Faulkner (1897 -)

"Sanctuary"

It is pleasing to note that William Faulkner in "Sanctuary" (1931) has carried American naturalists as far as they can go. They have run their gamut and now one may hope for a literature based on the best results of native experiment. In this book one finds "the most horrific tale" (1) the author or any one else could imagine, the most revolting abnormality, cruelty and sensationalism. Hemingway reads like William Dean Howells in comparison. The key is pitched when the central character, "Pop-eye," the incarnation of naturalism, is described as spitting into a spring from which another lost soul is desirous of drinking. (2) This fellow, Pop-eye, is the product of a peculiarly horrid childhood environment and disposition; it is his abnormally disgusting rape that carries the book to unbelievable extremes. Part of the story concerns itself with the underworld of bootlegging and prostitution, the background for Horace Benbow, Gowan Stevens and the college girl, Temple. The remainder of it deals with the experiences of these "higher" characters in their relation to their own and to this lower stratum of life.

(1) vi. Modern Library Preface, New York 1932.
(2) p. 4 ibid.

Narrative and Style

At first glance, Faulkner's narrative represents complete capitulation to confusion. Closer inspection, however, reveals a nodal method, wherein the past discovers itself "en route" as the story plunges ahead and then returns to make itself clear. Explanation is used sparingly to give that sense of uncertainty shared by the characters themselves. The narrative is calculated to carry out the impression of dazed, drunken depravity. It is splendidly done. Objections must be directed toward the content, for surely the manner is well-nigh perfect. The way vagueness has been elaborated makes Anderson master of lucid style. The same symbolism of houses, trees, and walls appears in both authors' work. Although Hemingway uses a blunt, 'he-man' dialogue, Faulkner shows that he is merely a 'sissy.' Five times on two pages (1) the discouraged harlot at Goodwin's murmurs to Pop-eye, "'You bastard.'" (The pages are short, too.) After the fifth repetition of this endearing term it begins to look as though she meant it.

"'You cook...," says Pop-eye.

Vernacular

"'Yes,' the woman said. She turned back to the stove. 'I cook. I cook for crimps and spungs and feebs. Yes, I cook.'" (2) Here is vernacular so particularized that it cannot even be understood by the average reader of the generation in which it was written.

(1) pp. 9-10 ibid.
(2) p. 8 ibid.

The student in his Victorian conservatism prefers the universally understood "bastard," and complains that, if he cared, he might never find out for whom the woman actually did cook.

Faulkner is certainly "a card." In a short story of his called "Spotted Horses," (1) he uses all the stock ingredients of American humour - tall tale mock-seriously told in dialect, etc., plus the same theme of cruelty! Humour may derive from highly improbable cruelty, but this story represents the most curious "melange" conceivable. Some day American literature will be through with the trial and errour method of ignorance.

(4) F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896 -) and Others

F. Scott Fitzgerald seems to have been phrase-maker for his generation. When "This Side of Paradise" (1920) appeared, he was regarded as another great 'find.' Edmund Wilson was one of those who lost their wagers on his future. The novel mentioned was little more than an exposé of the young, but written while the author was still at Princeton, it was hailed as an honest report of the collapse of youthful morality. There is in it some valid realism, the 'low-down' on preparatory school talks and that sort of thing, but truth in unimportant incident is used to gain credence

(1) Scribner's (June 1931) LXXXIX No.5
pp.585-597

for the extravagant. The novel suggests that 'everything is hopeless,' except for the possibility of a cold, enlightened selfishness:

"'There is no virtue of unselfishness that I cannot use. I can make sacrifices, be charitable, give to a friend, endure for a friend, lay down my life for a friend - all because these things may be the best possible expression of myself; yet I have not one drop of the milk of human kindness.'" (1) Most persons, however, accepted the futilitarian implication brought out more clearly in "These Sad Young Men," the story of how a check-up on the gay undergraduate a few years after college showed that the higher preparation for the lower life availed little.

Others

About the post-war work of John Dos Passos there is little to be said. "Three Soldiers" (1921) is a brutal treatment of the war to illustrate the horrour of it. All the writers of this school directed their energies toward proving that. As a collectivist, Dos Passos belongs to another chapter and (2) he is far more important there. The war theme is carried along by e. e. cummings in "The Enormous Room" (1922), proving that the French could torture as skilfully as their foe; by Thomas Boyd in "Through the Wheat (1923), an objective treatment of the Private Hicks's experience;

(1) p. 302 This Side of Paradise Scribner's N.Y. 1920
(2) The Proletarians

and by Laurence Stallings in "Plumes" (1924): "The theme is - 'If you are smashed badly ... and if you have any intelligence, you must remake a world to live in.'" (1) Louis Bromfield, although not concerned so much with war itself, belongs to the same group and deserves mention as a servile imitator of anything that looks good. (His"24 hours" is a sad copy of Dos Passos's "Manhattan Transfer.")

(5) Elizabeth Maddox Roberts (1886 -)

In contrast to the disillusion of these war-influenced writers, there stands out the work of Elizabeth Maddox Roberts. She was born in 1886 and waited forty years before bringing forth her first novel, "The Time of Man" (1926.) Thus her position among post-war writers depends from the time she writes, not from the subject matter or views her novels contain. "The Great Meadow" (1930) furnishes a good example of her craft for contrast with her contemporaries.

"The Great Meadow"

This book retells the "Enoch Arden" story against an American pioneer setting. Berk Jarvis is the first husband and Evan the second. It appears that Berk's mother had sacrificed her life to the Injun-chief, "Blackfox," to save her son's wife, Diony, who was with child. Berk was bent on revenge and delivers himself thus, before a journey to get salt:

(1) p. 385 Parrington op.cit.

(Diony) "What manner of child do you want me to get borned for you, Berk Jarvis? While you go west to make salt?"

"I want a strong boy-child. Name his name Tom. It's a good kind to get borned in a fort.."

(Diony) "I'll tell him his granny, Elvira Jarvis, her name was, died whilst she tried to save him and whilst she tried to save life in me. I'll tell him this while he is in a way to get borned..."

"Say more. Tell him when his pappy, Berk Jarvis, comes back from where he's gone to make the salt needed in the fort, he'll never rest content in his bed or get borned another until he goes beyond the Ohio and kills Blackfox, so help me God, or kills men enough of his kind." (1)

The Roberts Idiom

When Berk finally persuades Diony that he must go after the Flatfoot Indian chief, she uses the Roberts idiom in a way that brings out the real worth of the book.

"'I'll bake whatever cakes you need,' she said, speaking slowly. 'I couldn't say I'll bake e'er flavour of willingness into one, but I'll bake for you, Berk, the substance of all I promised when Coley Linkhorn joined us together...'" (2) There is much good in a passage like this: the woman's realization of the foolishness of such an expedition, her loyalty to frontier

(1) p. 215 The Great Meadow
(2) p. 243 ibid.

standards because her husband accepts them and the idiom itself to preserve flavour. Admirers of Roberts feel that the same standard is maintained throughout.

Well, Berk goes on his hunting trip. Upon his return he finds that rumours of his death had had considerable effect. Evan had married Diony, had built a new house for her, and furnished it with a child of his own. The return is a difficult problem well solved, but when Evan tells Berk, "If a man stays away from his home three years he can look to see a heap of changes," (1)the effect is little short of ludicrous. Berk replies, "Oh, God knows he can," but what he means in current lingo is, "Yassir, Boss!" Yet such flippant criticism of the author has to be limited narrowly.

Diony chose, "as was her right by the law in a new country," (2) and the second marriage, symbolically performed by the Rev. Daniel Boone, was dissolved.

Now there is a great deal to be advanced in behalf of Elizabeth Roberts's art, for she comes closer than any preceding writer to expressing the pioneer epic of the eighteenth century. Her improvement over the early historical romancers is too great for comparative purposes. In one way, she is of the post-War generation, because the primitive, the 'good earth,'

(1) p. 311 ibid.
(2) p. 316 ibid.

supplies an escape when contemporary values fail - only she emphasizes primitive goodness where other prefer primitive cruelty.

A Recipe for the Historical Novel

But herein lies the criticism of books like "The Great Meadow:" primitive simplicity is too transparent to be anything but dull or amusing. That revenge motive of Jarvis's was melodrama and as such absurd. Historical novelists have always laboured under the delusion that because our ancestors wore different clothes and used a somewhat different speech, they themselves were different. John Erskine alone seems to realize that every age is modern. (1) Of course, American pioneers were primitive, ignorant, dirty and everything else. A composite type will never be the foundation of a good frontier epic. Back in those times there were just as few intelligent persons as there are today, that is, intelligent in the abstract. A good many are always intelligent in concrete matters. The only way to treat the past is to use an intelligent character as a mirror for the primitive type; that will supply enough of it for colour. Such a character can measure the culture and circumstances of his age in a way that every generation will understand. His interpretation will never sink to a foolish primitivism decked out in historical artificialities; it will represent a living intellectual point of view that can always be shared by the adult-mind.

(1) A subject to be treated under that author's work.

The student has not forgotten the classical implication of the heroine's name, (1) nor the way in which Diony symbolizes the fusion of tidewater civilization and frontier reality. Elizabeth Maddox Roberts has made a commendable advance in the American frontier novel, but the field is still open to improvement. Any satisfactory treatment should take into serious consideration the point of view held by William Byrd of Westover.

No effort has been made to sketch Elizabeth Roberts's full literary stature. Her "Great Meadow" is simply cited as a balance to the typically futilitarian work of post-war youth.

VIII. A Number of Writers and their Work

A. "The Escapists"

In following the development of the novel thus far, some effort has been made to follow what seemed like a main highway. This road leads on from the twenties up to 1932. But unity has not permitted the study of a number of writers who form an integral part of their time, although perhaps they are not directly connected with the preceding discussion. Better to consider these figures by themselves, now that their background is understood, and by their ideas ye shall know them. The novelists in this chapter are inclined toward pessimism. They prefer, at heart, escape from contemporary reality.

(1) p. 14 The Great Meadow

(1) James Branch Cabell "Mundus Vult Decipi" (1)

Background

James Branch Cabell, after an adventurous journey from Poictesme, arrived at Richmond in Virginia as early as the year 1879. "Say they, speak they, tell they the tale" that he soon taught French and Greek at William and Mary, that he tried newspaper work, that he became no inconsiderable historian, genealogist, antiquarian. (2) He developed, naturally enough, the Richmond complex: "We Virginians cannot ever quite overcome our feeling that the Puritans are parvenus, deriving from families too recently arrived in this country to be yet completely Americanized. We have never, for that matter, learned to think of the Pilgrim Fathers and their descendants as belonging, exactly, to the gentry." (2) A Southern gentleman is speaking of his venerable, ancient and equally fictitious aristocracy. Probably this gentleman is not Mr. Cabell.

Attitude

The author came to his literary consciousness during the "Waverley Novel" period. When disillusion fell upon him, it was only necessary to change the attitude; romantic subject was quite suitable. With his background of learning it was but natural that he return to the medieval and use romantic cynicism as an artistic escape from this world altogether. Life here and now he regarded as so dreadful that illusion alone could sustain man in this 'vale of tears.' So Cabell jumped upon

(1) A favourite quotation of James Branch Cabell used throughout his work. Motto on jacket of The Silver Stallion

(2) p. 350 Pattee op.cit.

Pegasus, stuck his tongue in his cheek, and galloped off down "the road to laughter," (1) for "with effort the romantic can school himself into a detachment of head from heart in which he can smile at the contrast between his dreams and reality... The whole work of Cabell is a series of repetitions of one bitter 'jest' involving the night before and the morning after. Such writers, emotionally romantic but intellectually skeptical, choose to laugh at the predicament rather than weep." Cabell himself is sufficiently on record: "I perceive, contrariwise, the practice of a sedate pessimism to be a firm savior of contentment," (2) or again, concerning gallantry: "In fine, the gallant person is a well balanced skeptic, who comprehends that he knows very little, and probably amounts to somewhat less, but has the grace to keep his temper." (3)

Cynicism is directed toward chivalry, as in Ellen Glasgow, toward gallantry and toward love, choicest of illusions and most sympathetically treated. Jurgen says to his wife in regard to marriage, "No,let us cultivate a judicious abstention from familiarity: such is our secret of an enduring, because endurable, marriage." (4)

(1) p. 134 Humanism in America "The Dilemma of Modern Tragedy" by Allan Reynolds Thompson
(2) p. 167 These Restless Heads
(3) p. 131 Beyond Life
(4) p. 204 Jurgen Grosset & Dunlap 20th printing. September 1927.

Art

In art, Michaud (1) holds that it was Cabell's "ambition to restore romanticism to its former rights, by ridding it of exaggerated realism on the one hand, and of Puritanism on the other." The function of the artist is to furnish illusion (that Voltairian "queen of the human heart,")"to write perfectly of beautiful things," (2) to express the "demi-urge" (3) which is that primal, imaginative impulse to ego expansion, "the force-producing illusion." (4) Many persons have missed all this purpose. The London Times 'opines' that "it requires a nicer touch than Mr. Cabell's to reproduce the atmosphere of the Middle Ages... The artifice is more apparent than the art ..." (5)

"Off-hand (began John Charteris) I would say that books are best insured against oblivion through practise of the auctorial virtues of distinction and clarity, of beauty and symmetry, of tenderness and truth and urbanity." (6) Certainly Mr. Cabell has distinction of style, and it arises chiefly from his "contrapuntal prose," "the language used for the translation of poems that have never been written." (7) (The author always

(1) p. 201 op.cit.
(2) constantly repeated throughout
(3) chapter beginning p. 23 in Beyond Life (Mod. Library)
(4) p. XV ibid.
(5) a quotation from Beyond Life emphasized in Manly & Rickert Contemporary American Literature p. 26.
(6) p. 23 Beyond Life
(7) p. 353 Pattee op.cit. and throughout Cabell

wished to be a poet, apparently.) "Poetic prose of the romantic type arises, like all other romantic confusions, from a stress of emotion that tends to overflow all formal boundaries; in its more refined forms it is the direct outcome of what I have called the dalliance of soul and sense in the tower of ivory." (1) Nonetheless, it is remarkably beautiful in many Cabellian passages. What tenderness there is, is always aroused by beauty and the youthful illusion.

Content

The author's symmetry appears only in his style, with which great care is taken. There is no narrative worthy of the name in any books of "The High History," rather episodes in a spiritual autobiography that the "demi-urge" has rendered universal. Outside this slim autobiographical claim, the works lie far away from the novel, which is probably why Michaud (2) makes the absurd statement that, "The author of 'Jurgen' is the only philosophical novelist in the United States today." Further reason for such a mistake is found in the inevitable theme of discovered failure and in the belief "that all enduring art must be an allegory," (3) for Cabell thinks any realistic form doomed. As he expresses it, "I appear to foresee a time when a book based upon any of our twentieth century 'mores' will be at one with a book dealing with the mercantile code of

(1) p. 158 The New Laokoon eighth impression Irving Babbitt
(2) p. 221 op.cit.
(3) p. 266 Beyond Life

Sidon, or with the narrow-mindedness of village life in Kish during the reign of Semiramis." (1)

Satiric Humour and Cabell Peculiarities

Clarity, urbanity, and the like are all part of the author's appeal, in turn largely based upon satiric humour. This is either a too"broad innuendo" according to some, or a "delightful ribaldry" in the opinion of others. "'Each has his métier,' the little man admitted modestly. 'The flea leaps well, most senators carry their liquor well, whereas the clergy, one deduces from the numerousness of their children --'" (2)

"The religion of Hell is patriotism and the government is an enlightened democracy." (3) As to the possible source of the last part, compare "Paradise Lost:" (4)

> "Must we renounce, and changing style, be called
> Princes of hell, for so the popular vote
> Inclines, here to continue and build up here
> A growing empire; ..."

Part of Cabell's humour comes from that aristocratic attitude incidentally responsible for the 'smart' pose. "'Come Jurgen, you who are King of Eubonia!' says Horvendile, with his wide-set eyes a-twinkle; 'what is there in you or me to attest that our Author has not composed our romances with his tongue

(1) p. 118 These Restless Heads
(2) p. 4 Straws and Prayer-books
(3) p. 277 Jurgen
(4) Bk. II ll. 311-314

in his cheek?'" (1) Smartness leads to an attempt to elude the reader, either through reference to fictitious commentators on "The High History of Jurgen" (2)

Anagrams

or through anagrams. Here are anagrammatic examples:

Vel-Tyno = Novelty

Aesred = Seroda = Erda es = Adores = "Our Lady of Compromise and of Conformity, and the inveterate mistress of all middle ways" (3) and of Wednesdays

Ageus = usage

Sesphra = phrases

Then these plain anagrams merge into etymology and mythology, always in the most abstruse way. Enjoyment of Cabell's literaturs if impossible until the majority of these peculiar words is understood. The design is to obtain an out-of-the-way effect, a new approach to an old romantic beauty. The objection to jig-saw puzzles might well be raised to such writing, but most readers that go through the necessary, preliminary study (4) are well satisfied to be "in the know." Possibly Cabell is trading on human nature, for he does provide 'good fun' in this way. Personally, the student feels that such tricks in manner betray a poverty of content, in which respect Cabell is limited to the repetition of his old illusion theme continually reclothed in a new manner.

(1) p. 221 Jurgen
(2) as on back of dedicatory page in Jurgen
(3) p. 131 These Restless Heads
(4) in Notes on Figures of Earth Cranwell & Cover

"Branch Cabell" Recently he gave up writing in his characteristic Poictesme manner and began to be reminiscent under the name of "Branch Cabell," author of "These Restless Heads" (1932). Having passed his prime, he felt no further desire "to guide the unicorn in double harness with the dray horse." (1) The country of his imagination with its maps, its hybrid names, genealogies and saga from "The Biography of Dom Manuel" is to be left to posterity, as soon as its creator can make the final revisions of his books. In "These Restless Heads," "devotees of Mr. Cabell will find interest in some of the comments and explanations of the 'Biography...; but the general reader will feel that it is a bedraggled phoenix that has risen a little way from the ashes of Poictesme." (2) The author has left his owncriticism of his work: "I am by no means sure this curious 'tour de force' was worth performing; but I am unshakably convinced that (he) 'brings it off' to a nicety." (3) The Cabellian manner is a noteworthy literary achievement at any rate.

(1) p. 15 These Restless Heads
(2) Saturday Review February 13, 1932 Review of These Restless Heads
(3) quoted by Pattee op.cit. p. 354

(2) Joseph Hergesheimer (1880 -)

"Now in order to approach the most striking but one of all modern instances, and the case which in so many features, I believe, resembles my own case (Cabell's,) I must recapitulate a great deal written a while back, when Joseph Hergesheimer was to me , in the main, a collection of some half a dozen books, and the hand which wrote them had shaken my hand not more than half a dozen times. Since then we have become - within the limits of such confidence as remains possible and wary between creative writers, - rather intimate..." (1) From this friendship and a certain superficial similarity in point of view arises Cabell's charitable criticism of Hergesheimer's work. This work went fourteen years without a publisher (1) - the most significant single fact, in the Virginian's mind, about his friend's art. It explains to "that monstrous clever fellow" why "nearly all the men in Mr. Hergesheimer's books are hag-ridden by one or another sole desire which spurs them toward a definite goal, through every instant of their mimic lives."

"14 Years"

"Those fourteen years explain...the Hergesheimer women, too, those somewhat troublingly ornamental odalisques. They are fine costly toys, tricked out in curious tissues: and waiting for the strong male's leisure, they smile cryptically." (2)

(1) pp. 194-195 Straws and Prayer-books 2nd edition
(2) pp. 197-198 ibid.

These characters are behaviouristic, static, the "romantic projection of adolescent day-dreaming wherein a fat boy imagines himself the dashing young blade. The substance of this dream can only make one character per novel; the other characters give way to shadows." (1)

Those fourteen years explain for Cabell the Hergesheimer frustration, the romantic beginning with the disillusion ending, (2) and the striving to escape "the dreary and impertinent duty of improving the world" in "the worship of unattainable beauty." (3) This beauty is usually identified with some superficially lovely female, thus: "Love was the supreme force, and its greatest expression a desire beyond the body ... The endless service of beauty. Of course, a woman -- but never the animal; the spirit always. Born in the spirit, served in the spirit, ending in the spirit. A direct contradiction, you see, to nature and common-sense, frugality and the sacred symbol of the dollar. The old gesture toward the stars, the bridge of perfection, the escape from the fatality of the flesh. Yet it was a service of the body made incredibly lovely in actuality and still never to be grasped. Never to be won." (4) Women are thus regarded avocationally as the symbol of beauty unattainable for a fat Quaker boy.

(1) p. 200 Contemporary American Authors "Joseph Hergesheimer" by J. B. Priestley
(2) Linda Condon
(3) p. 179 "Pandora's Box in American Fiction" H.H. Clark in Humanism and America
(4) p. 203 Straws and Prayer-books J.B. Cabell

Quaker Background

A much more significant light than Cabell's fourteen-year ray shines forth from Hergesheimer's Quaker, sombre background and the art escape into bright, strong colours. "He is a man of the senses and his appeal is to the senses (despite talk of the spirit.) He is perfectly in key with his age (after fourteen years,) he will make moving pictures -- the eye first of all must be satisfied. Hence color like a Turner painting, hence costume in minutest detail -- the outer inventory of his feminine characters is like that of the social column of a fashionable ladies' weekly. Everywhere lingerie and old lace. Open him at random.

"'Howat saw, in the yellow candlelight, a woman not, he decided, any better looking than Caroline, in an extremely low-cut gown of scarlet, with a rigid girdle of saffron brocade, a fluted tulle ruff tied with a scarlet string about a long, slim neck, and a cap of sheer cambric with a knot of black ribbons.'

"Enough! Every noun has its color adjective, every verb its adverb, and when he touches a shawl" (1) he goes absolutely colour-crazy. ("Recommended Reading" for Hergesheimer: Lessing, "Laokoon.") This sensuous appeal is the main substance of his art, a substance commercialized for ready market. "The Hergesheimer who opens a magazine essay with the salute, 'I am getting damned tired of art' is easily understood, if his own

(1) pp. 347-348 Pattee op.cit.

particular brand of it be meant." (1)

The action is, very naturally, sensational and episodic. Intense plots are frequently of the "Tampico" sort, wherein action is advanced by a heavy beer bottle splintering across an unfortunate head. (2) Narrative method alternates action with chunks of topical assignments in history in a way suggestive of W. Harrison Ainsworth at his worst.

Historical Method

As to this historical method, the criticism of J. B. Priestley is interesting: "He has congratulated himself on the fact that he has been able to produce narrative - set in the past without being labelled an historical novelist. (The student now so labels him, and as a bad one at that.) This points to a virtue, for it means that his work has been without that layer of dust common to historical novels, has had a beauty and, as it were, urgency not to be found in them. (Yet what of the absolute measurement?) But it also points to a defect, for had he possessed a more apparent historical sense, he would inevitably have come to be thought of as an historical novelist, which even now is not altogether a term of abuse. The fact is, however, that when he gives us an eighteenth-century story, we do not see that century and enter into its life, but merely see Joseph Hergesheimer, in a wig and knee

(1) p. 155 More Contemporary Americans Percy H. Boynton
(2) p. 36 Tampico

breeches, dreaming in an Adams room." (1) A novelized group of short stories called "Quiet Cities" (1928) is an excellent example.

Besides using colour for unusual flavour, this author seeks contrast to heighten effect in every possible way. In "Java Head," the setting is merchant Salem before the Civil War. What better contrast than to have Jerrit Ammidon bring a glamourous Chinese princess, Taou Yuen, back home as his wife?

Style

The style is incoherent, pseudo-impressionistic, affectedly careless, and badly derived, possibly from Henry James. "Thus when Mr. Hergesheimer is speaking of the pleasure he took in a Cuban opera company he had heard in New York: 'But not so much for the singing,' he says, 'it had been the dancer, Doloretes, who captivated me, a woman as brilliant as the orange-red shawl draped before me over a chair, and suddenly, tragically, dead in New York.' It took me (J. W. Beach) an appreciable interval to correct my impression that it was the red shawl that had died in New York, and that was enough to disperse altogether the sense of tragedy in the death of the lady who captivated Mr. Hergesheimer." (2) In his appeal to the senses, in his tawdry escapes, this author represents a definite compartment of the pre-depression American mind.

(1) p. 183 Contemporary American Authors J.C. Squire Ed. Henry Holt N.Y. 1928. Essay: "Joseph Hergesheimer" by J. B. Priestley

(2) p. 39 The Outlook for American Prose by Joseph Warren Beach. "Incoherence in the Aesthete," he styles it.

(3) Willa Cather (1876 -)

Background

Now the history chronicles a writer of worth whose philosophy is an escape nothing like that of Hergesheimer, but in some respects allied to the more tenable position of Cabell. Willa Cather, as one recalls her graduation from the University of Nebraska in 1895, typifies the "first recognized product of a new force in American life: the Western university." (1) Zona Gale, Dorothy Canfield, followed. Willa Cather's life gave her intimate acquaintance with the emigrant, pioneer background of the later nineteenth century as it changed in Nebraska and in the mid-Western states.

Philosophy

This is the way she 'looks at life' - disillusion is inevitable upon the realistic plane. Life is an enemy even to ideals, so that death before disillusion is the only salvation. Tom Outland, the young idealist in "The Professor's House," died before his invention was commercialized in a cheap way. Claude Wheeler in "One of Ours" felt no weakness although mortally wounded by German fire. "He felt only one thing; that he commanded wonderful men." (2) Many critics have considered this book the usual type of Wharton, "my-boy" war treatment. In reality, Cather was not deceived at all by the war; here it is the same question of death preserving the beautiful illusion. Claude

(1) p. 260 Pattee op.cit.
(2) p. 453 2nd ed.

"died believing his own country better than it is, and France better than any country can ever be." (1) Marion Forrester, "The Lost Lady," had to face disillusion, and perhaps with indelicacy, because she went on living. Death at the proper moment would have saved her, as it did a character in "O Pioneers!" (2) The mortally-wounded Marie laid her head upon her beloved Emil's lifeless breast and "once there, she seemed not to have struggled any more." This is the death escape, far more Eastern than American, and it is quite possible that this country will eventually come to sympathize with the Oriental point of view.

Other Escapes

There are other escapes. "In religion seeking is finding." (3) Willa Cather has a good deal of the medieval ascetic in her and speaks "of how a moonstone girl found her way out of a vague, easy-going world into a life of disciplined endeavor." (4) In religion, the emphasis is upon illusion for this life, not reward in the hereafter. (5)

Romantic primitivism is another way out. It is possible, thinks the author, to rebuild the tissue of the simple, primitive self generally found in adolescence,

(1) p. 458 ibid.
(2) title probably from Whitman's poem of the name. Quote from p. 269.
(3) p. 111 My Mortal Enemy
(4) p. 480 The Song of the Lark
(5) Shadows on the Rock illustrates the religious tendency. Roman Catholicism, of course.

or in "the all-suffusing brightness of being twenty-one." (1) One must not think that Willa Cather is unacquainted with the bitterness of youth. But from this feeling art becomes "only a way of remembering youth," looked back upon with a sort of re-clarified vision. "Wagner says, in his most beautiful opera, that art is only a way of remembering youth. And the older we grow the more precious it seems to us, and the more richly we can present that memory. When we've got it all out - the last, the finest thrill of it, the brightest hope of it ... then we stop. We do nothing but repeat after that.. The stream has reached the level of its source. That's our measure." (2)

Art

Marriage and Love

Consequently marriage fails because one heart can never be shared. Professor St. Peter's real soul that guides his historical writing has nothing to do with the materialistic woman he married because of sexual instinct, nor the marriage nor the children nor the house that followed of their own accord. (3) Frank Shabata warped the spontaneous nature of his Marie. Illicit, but beautiful love resulted for the "Pioneers." Alexandra said (4) that "most of my girls have married men they were afraid of." Love, therefore, in Catherian novels is generally either illicit or fleeting enough to jibe with these theories.

(1) p. 18 O Pioneers!
(2) p. 460 The Song of the Lark
(3) The Professor's House
(4) p. 228 O Pioneers!

The Primitive

Love of primitive nature is evident in books like "The Professor's House" or "Death Comes to the Arch-Bishop." It shows itself generally in a concern over the ancient art of the Southwestern Indians. A better phase of it is the stock Mother-Demeter position: "The heart, when it is too much alive, aches for that brown earth, and ecstasy has no fear of death. It is the old and the poor and the maimed who shrink from that brown hole; its wooers are found among the young, the passionate, the gallant-hearted." (1) The grave was just another aspect of 'the good earth:' "That, too, was beautiful, that simple doorway into forgetfulness." (1) Here again is the un-American point of view toward death combined, this time, with probably the best of all possible attitudes toward the soil.

Too Much Objectivity

Such an objective philosophy is excellent except where it tends toward morbidity in literary practice; for example, Frank Shabata shoots Marie and her lover Emil; "one ball had torn through her right lung, another had shattered the carotid artery." (2) A writer must remember that the effect of the naturalist's matter-of-fact style is likely to be anything but objective. Fortunately, the word "carotid," whatever it may mean, is an exception in Willa Cather's writing.

(1) p. 257 O Pioneers
(2) p. 269 Ibid.

Central Theme

Her central theme is, obviously, Idealism and what happens to it in this 'vale of tears,' the "struggle for aesthetic or emotional self-realization amid the sordid environment of either the frontier or of industrial society." (1)

Narrative

The narrative method is generally reminiscent and therefore consistent with Cather's art. "The Professor's House," for example, is broken in the middle by "Tom Outland's Story," then carried along to a conclusion. There is no doubt but what this method is best adapted to the book. But in "Shadows on the Rock," narrative breaks down completely into a composite mosaic. "Obscure Destinies" (1932) is a series of three short stories based on the familiar Nebraskan background. It rather looks as though "the stream had reached the level of its source."

Characters

Characters include Cliff Dwellers, Spanish Conquerors, many artist types, Bohemian-Norwegian pioneers, modern American farmers, railroad men and professors, all unified by the West and almost all disillusioned. Death comes in time to the Archbishop and to Claude Wheeler. Marian Forrester is disillusioned by her search for delicacy, Marian Henshaw; by her own "mortal enemy." When Alexandra discovers her brother's grasping desire for her land, she says, "I think I would rather not have lived to find out what I have today." (2)

(1) p. 178 H.H. Clark op.cit. in Humanism and America
(2) p. 172 O. Pioneers!

These persons may not form a very cheerful group, but they represent North America (with the exception of the South and New England) as the creations of no other artist do, and Willa Cather's settings are equally inclusive.

In General

Her work is highly eclectic - nothing of the documentarian appears therein - and displays everywhere the greatest economy. In "Death Comes to the Archbishop," however, the simple chronicle style used becomes monotonous; it is a technique better adapted to short forms. "The Lost Lady" and "My Mortal Enemy" illustrate the way the author has developed her "novel demeuble." The former is an achievement of high value superior to "Ethan Frome." Connotative style is responsible for a large part of this excellence, although "My Mortal Enemy" suggests the limit. From what has been said, it is apparent that Willa Cather's genius is for forms less than full novel length. Within these limits she has accomplished outstanding literary work for all time. "O Pioneers!," "The Song of the Lark," "One of Ours," "The Professor's House," "My Antonia," and possibly "Death Comes to the Archbishop", hold to a standard that is high but not comparable.

B. One Typically American Novelist:
Newton Booth Tarkington (1869 -)

Mr. Tarkington is the kind of novelist that makes a history of literature resemble the Holy Roman Empire. Above everything else, he is a lesson in critical restraint. Just at present there seems to be nothing to do about it. He represents the Indiana tradition of James Whitcomb Riley and it is customary to mention a long list of Hoosiers - Edward Eggleston, Maurice Thompson, Meredith Nicholson, John Hay, Lew Wallace, David Graham Phillips, George Ade, but the last four have not the fully autochthonous flavour. Riley and Tarkington deal in that "folksy" interpretation of life most evident in the romantic treatment of 'the small town,' from which E. W. Howe, Masters, Anderson, Lewis and the mature Zona Gale revolted. "'Look,' said Helen. 'Aren't they the dear people?' 'The beautiful people!' he answered." (1)

"The Hoosiers"

Concerning "Monsieur Beaucaire," Mr. Tarkington says:

Historical Method

"Romance was the fashion then; a romanticism somewhat sentimental, but more concerned with the continuous movement of incredible 'characters' than with sentiment. What the action of my own small outright romance in the fashion required was that nearly all the secondary characters should be inimical to the principal

(1) p. 66 Booth Tarkington by Robert C. Holliday Doubleday, Page N.Y. 1918.

figure; and I had happened to conceive this principal figure as a sympathetic French gentleman, sojourning in England. Therefore the inimical characters were all English,and, as the action was based upon snobbery, all the English depicted were shown to be virulent and ruthless snobs except one." (1) Professor Pattee says the book, although melo-drama, has a "Gallic deftness of phrase and 'finesse' that must have come from much revision," a very charitable view, certainly. The above quotation is interesting because the author never went beyond the spirit of it in his efforts to please the public taste. "The cloak and sword" he kept near him until 1913; "The Flirt" published in this year marked an attempt at realism of the superficial adolescent type that lasted through 1916; later came 'the more ambitious social studies' like "The Magnificent Ambersons" (1917) and "Alice Adams" (1921). (2) For those fortunate enough to be unfamiliar with the last-named book, the two ending pages are quoted in a condensed form. Alice had failed to make an old-fashioned marriage-match and this is how the story ends:

Further Writing

"Alice Adams"

"She passed the tobacconists, and before her was that dark entrance to the wooden stairway leading up to Frincke's Business College - the very doorway she had always looked upon as the end of youth and the end of hope.

(1) p. 77 Pattee op.cit. The underlining is the student's.
(2) pp. 74-80 Pattee op.cit

"Well, she was here at last! She looked up and down the street quickly, and then, with a little heave of the shoulder, she went bravely in, under the sign, and began to climb the wooden steps. Halfway up the shadows were heaviest, but after that the place began to seem brighter. There was an open window overhead somewhere, she found, and the steps at the top were gay with sunshine."

"so persistent a reputation"

It is no wonder that "Tarkingtons" could be ordered by the half-dozen before they were written. (1) The student, in looking vainly through his notes for something worth writing down about this symbol of American averagism, was able to find nothing but some lecture material and a little reinforcement from Carl Van Doren. The latter corrects a common misunderstanding when he says, "The author of 'Penrod', of 'Penrod and Sam' and 'Seventeen' passes for an expert in youth; rarely has so persistent a reputation been so insecurely founded. What all these books primarily recall is the winks that adults exchange over the heads of children who are minding their own business, as the adults are not; the winks, moreover, of adults who have forgotten the inner concerns of adolescence and now observe only its surface awkwardness." (2)

(1) p. 108 Some Contemporary Americans P.H. Boynton
(2) p. 86-87 Contemporary American Novelists Carl Van Doren

Of American life Booth Tarkington is no interpreter but an actual specimen. He is the typical, native mind writing a novel; he is what should be exhibited to those extremists who demand genuine American art disassociated from the main stream of world culture.

From Mark Twain

From Mark Twain comes the idea of humour. There is in Tarkington the same amused treatment of American crudities and the same picaresque handling of the village cut-up, be it in Tom and Huck or Penrod and Sam. Twain pictured frontier roughness, the vigour of which was soon drained off, so that only the dregs remained for Tarkington. Consequently the value of the earlier writer disappears in his follower.

From W.D. Howells

From Howells comes that homespun, Yankee smugness that exalts the democratic commonplace. The average reader was to feel at home in literature, otherwise it was not real. But Howells with all his narrowness was at least urbane, acquainted with the literature and culture of other lands. Tarkington thinks foreigners are no good at all.

How can mere critical politeness be extended to a writer "whose imagination has never gained entrance to the twentieth century" (1) and whose mind was third-class in the nineteenth? (2)

(1) p. 80 Pattee op.cit.
(2) Mr. Tarkington seems to think it time to return to his old tricks. A few months ago there appeared under his name, "Wanton Mally" (1932), heralded as "A Gay Romance of England in the Days of Charles the Merry."

C. Intelligent Optimists

(1) Ellen Anderson Gholson Glasgow (1874 -)

Background

Ellen Glasgow was born at Richmond-in-Virginia in 1874. She came from a family of judges, lawyers and "sheltered lives," and spent most of her time at home in self-education. "When I first began writing," she says, "I steeped myself in economics, in sociology and later in German mysticism. But one learns only that one may unlearn, if necessary." (1) With these interests it is not strange that Ellen Glasgow hates the short story. (1)

No Puritan

She is no Puritan. "You are all tainted with Puritanism, even down here in Virginia, when, Heaven knows! you ought to have escaped the blight. But America is an American nation, and the danger with national anaemia is that it runs to fanaticism in the brain. You are so harassed by the ideas of indecency that when you can't find fresh food for scandal, you resort to the canned variety." (2) This is the attitude of a character for whom the author has great sympathy.

Fate

Only courage can conquer Brooms-edge Fate (3), maintains Miss Glasgow, and "there is a little brass Buddha on her desk in the house in Richmond." (4)

(1) p. 28 The Women Who Make Our Novels Grant Overton
(2) p. 228 The Romantic Comedians
(3) Barren Ground
(4) p. 29 The Women Who Make Our Novels Grant Overton

Theme

Her theme, the friend James Branch Cabell takes "to be The Tragedy of Everywoman, as it was lately enacted in the Southern States of America." (1) (Cabell and Glasgow have dedicated books to each other and done all within their power to build up a sound literary tradition for Virginia.) Miss Glasgow picked up the New South in a really serious manner after Thomas Nelson Page got through with his "Marse Tom" interpretation. In her treatment of this theme, she might at first seem merely a clever, sophisticated Anne Parrish or a superficial novelist of manners like Edith Wharton. On the contrary, her interest lies in a positive, purposeful social satire quite removed from the 'society' portrayal. She is somewhat against the old-fashioned conventions of inherited American history, as for example, Southern Aristocracy or the Cavalier Tradition. Cabell takes a similar position. Ellen Glasgow finds that the South has been lacking in literary output because the paradox of the cavalier involved in the democratic experiment has interfered. Most northerners have been wholly oblivious to this particular challenge to republican good work.

The author expresses the matter as follows:

"I find one of the most fascinating dramas in all the facets of life to be the great epic of changing

(1) pp. 257-8 Pattee op.cit.

conditions and the adjustment of individuals to the new order. Naturally the battle is always sharpest and the most dramatic in those places where the older system has been most firmly intrenched. And that is why the coming of the new order in the South has been attended by so many dramatic stories." (1) All this to Cabell is about as compelling as, briefly, "the village life of Kish under the reign of Semiramis."

Special Interests

1. Victorians

Ellen Glasgow has made a comprehensive study of southern Victorianism in such aspects as these:

1. The intellectual arrogance of southern men. (Most of them have it because their women were supposed to be reticent. cp. Virginius Littlepage in "They Stooped to Folly.")
2. Religious Smugness. (Mrs. Burden in "They Stooped to Folly")
3. Chivalry toward wives and the "care-taking" desire on part of Virginian gentlemen. (Judge Honeywell in "The Romantic Comedians")
4. How the Victorian male insisted it was a man-made world, but was sentimental and specious in grief, vanity and honour. (The Judge, again)
5. How Victorian decorum covers a multitude of bad thoughts. (Honeywell uses euphemisms, such as the "French manner" even to his twin sister, Edmonia, who represents Victorian sophistication.) (2)

(1) p. 31 The Women Who Make Our Novels Grant Overton
(2) p. 29 The Romantic Comedians

2. The Younger Generation — A comprehensive study of the Younger Generation in such aspects as these:

1. That young people pretend to no foolish innocence. (Millie Burden in "They Stooped to Conquer")
2. Their bluntness of speech, hatred of sham, frankness about money. (Millie, again)
3. Their ideas concerning "the scar of being jilted." (Millie is too interested in her own life to pine away in a spare room like Aunt Agatha. There are many "Aunt Agathas" in Glasgow books.)
4. Concerning the right to be temperamental and irresponsible. (Martin Welding in "They Stooped to Folly")
5. Their futilitarian inability to substitute new standards, which makes for pseudo-intellectuals of the scatter-brained variety. (Martin Welding, again)
6. The distinction between pity and understanding. (Judge Honeywell pities but Annabel understands.)

Purpose — The foregoing illustrations show how completely Ellen Glasgow has entered into the spirit of two ages; and all this content has been woven into her later books in a most satisfactory fashion. She visualizes her theme and characters in a very broad, symbolic way:

"When I began Virginia I had in mind three books dealing with the adjustment of human lives to changing conditions.

"In Virginia I wanted to do the biography of a woman, representative of the old system of chivalry and showing her relation to that system and the changing order. Virginia's education, like that of every other well-bred Southern woman of her day, was designed to paralyze her reasoning faculties and to eliminate all danger of mental unsettling. Virginia was the passive and helpless victim of the ideal of feminine self-sacrifice. The circumstances of her life first molded and then dominated her.

"Gabriella was a product of the school, but instead of being used by circumstances, she used them to create her own destiny. The two books are exact converses. When Virginia is passive, Gabriella is active.

"Virginia desired happiness, but did not expect it, much less fight for it, and consequently when self-sacrifice was the ideal of womanhood she became submerged by circumstances just as have been so many other women of her type. Gabriella, on the other hand, desired happiness and insisted on happiness. Gabriella had the courage of action and through conquering circumstances wrested from life her happiness and success." (1)

(1) p. 32 The Women Who Make Our Novels Grant Overton

Other Books

One of Ellen Glasgow's earliest books, "The Descendant," shows a determination to deal with the past only in its bearing upon the present, a point of view largely responsible for her effectiveness. "The Battle-ground" (1902) describes the old regime and its destruction after the Civil War. In "The Romance of a Plain Man" (1909) emphasis is laid upon the agony of reconstruction. "The Voice of the People" (1900), written when the author was but twenty-six, deals with the new order. (1) "Virginia," "Life and Gabriella," "The Builders," and "Barren Ground" centre about the chief victims of the tragedy. As a sectional writer, the author was accorded extravagant praise long ago by Southern chauvinists who did not understand what she was about, but at the time her art did not deserve it. "The Romantic Comedians" (1926) and "They Stooped to Folly" (1929) represent a maturity that does merit warm approval.

Plots and Patterns

Many of these books contain amazing coincidences of plot, however, that are anything but convincing. In "Barren Ground," the central character, Dorinda, is relieved of an onerous pregnancy by a convenient collision with a taxicab. Her resultant disabilities lead to the meeting of that rich doctor who was so good to her and who so promptly faded out of the story. In "They Stooped to Folly" it is odd that Mary Victoria should bring home from her European relief work a hus-

(1) p. 257 Pattee op.cit.

who had previously caused her father's secretary a good deal of obstetrical inconvenience, but this coincidence is more understandable. Although Glasgow does lean too heavily upon plot, the recurrences of patterns containing alcoholic sons and romantic elderly gentlemen is rather the fault of her model than of her art.

Characters

It might be said that her characters are not vital, that they are mere tools for a theoretical discussion. To a limited extent this is necessarily true, but the later work is not so marred, for the author has too great a penetration into character, particularly male, from the female point of view. A Gertrude Atherton will merely assume man's arrogance; Edith Wharton lets the matter drop with the double-standard observation; Ellen Glasgow and Virginia Woolf carry on the subtle insight of Jane Austen. "In the severe discipline of marriage Mr. Littlepage had cultivated the habit of looking at his wife without seeing her." (1)

"The mistake women, wives, have always made is that they have concentrated too intensely on emotion. They have made emotion the only thing in the world. Husband and wife must be mentally companionable if this happiness is to last through the years." (2)

"Responsibilities of the Novelist"

"There are three things a novelist has to prove to himself," (Ellen Glasgow believes.) "First,

(1) p. 61 They Stooped to Folly
(2) p. 31 The Women Who Make Our Novels Grant Overton

he must show an ability to create personalities; second, he must exhibit a sincerity of style; and third, he must evince the capacity for an intelligent criticism of life. Without these he is not worth very much in a serious, big way. To contribute to the knowledge and understanding of life - that should be his motive in writing, not primarily to create a pleasant impression." (1) Without discussing the point further, it may be observed that she lives up to the best spirit of these 'laws.'

Realism

She is a realist, but a painter, not a photographer. Hers is a realism refined by satire. "In the early part of 1916 she declared that contemporary English fiction was superior to American fiction, that Americans were demanding from writers and politicians alike an 'evasive idealism' and a 'sham optimisn' and 'a sugary philosophy, utterly without any basis in logic or human experience.'" (2)"...And realism is only the truth of life told, and is the writer's true business." (3) "Profuseness is her major defect" according to Sherman, (4) but it is a criticism chiefly applicable to the early work.

Appeal

Miss Glasgow exercises a legerity variously known as 'wit,' 'charm,' etc. She never bears too

(1) p. 28 ibid.
(2) pp. 22-23 ibid.
(3) p. 26 ibid.
(4) p. 260 Pattee op.cit.

heavily upon a point, permitting several facets 'to twinkle' all at once. Perhaps it is the Cabellian manner improved by her female touch. "They Stooped to Folly" is sub-titled, "A Comedy of Morals," and "dedicated to James Branch Cabell .. in acknowledgment of Something About Eve ... this book that commemorates the chivalry of men." Here are examples:

Of Mrs. Dalrymple - "Before her fortunate second marriage and even more fortunate widowhood.." (1)

Of the secretary - She was "attractive enough to arrest his attention without unsettling the stable equilibrium of his emotions." (2)

Of Mrs. Littlepage - "She was one of those women who might still be beautiful if she had less confidence in the fidelity of her husband." (3)

Of Judge Noneywell - "'I'm a bird with a broken wing,' sighs the old Judge, left a widower at sixty-five, but after a year he began to detect 'odd palpitations within the suave Virginia depths of his being, where his broken wing was helplessly trying to flutter.'" (4)

Of a young man's qualifications - "Eva sighed vaguely, listening to the soft April wind in the trees. 'Yes, he's a fine boy, I'm very fond of John; but he isn't the kind a young girl falls in love with. Somehow, he

(1) p. 16 They Stooped to Conquer
(2) p. 5 ibid.
(3) p. 61 ibid.
(4) p. 259 Pattee op.cit. As quoted from The Romantic Comedians p. 1

is too - too honest - and perhaps too unselfish. It takes more than character to awaken love - especially first love.'" (1)

Rhythm

In rhythm Ellen Glasgow's style is the modern equivalent of Addison's; it is neo-classical in its beautiful balance. Even the English recognize Ellen Glasgow as "the" modern exponent, for she is always the conscious artist about using the language as it should be used. Her content will always prevent her from sharing the fate of, say Cabell, and getting lost in her own style. This author has her literary favourites, to be sure, yet she says, "as far as I am aware, I have worked my own method out for myself." (2) The reader is inclined to agree, and accord Ellen Glasgow a high place in literature on the basis of her fully-developed art.

(2) Dorothy Canfield (Fisher) (1879 -)

Her Ideas

Along the American highroad, Dorothy Canfield accompsnies optimism and intelligence as far as these two friendly enemies can possibly go together. She has something of the sincere social interest of Ellen Glasgow but too little of that writer's pleasantry. Her attitude toward life is best contrasted with that of Willa Cather. The one is the ideal optimist; the other the ideal pessimist. The latter conceives life on the realistic plane to be an inevitable disillusion,

(1) p. 195 The Sheltered Life
(2) p. 29 The Women Who Make Our Novels Grant Overton

whereas, for the former it is quite good enough. Where Cather is ever seeking the abstract ideal, Canfield is busy with the concrete. Her views deserve respectful consideration because of her intimate knowledge of France and her splendid educational background. The study of French culture has served only to strengthen her opinion that America's salvation lies within the country itself, not in any Wharton-like borrowing from Europe.

Life

Because this author exemplifies the highly educated type of modern American woman, it is worth while enguiring into a few of the details of her life. (1) Like Willa Cather, she is the product of the Western university. Her father was president of Ohio State, her mother a painter. Graduation was followed by a Ph. D. degree from Columbia, study at the Sorbonne and specialization in Romance languages throughout. Papini's "Life of Christ" in English was a translation of hers. In 1907 she married and settled in Vermont, so that her experience included the Middle-West, Europe and New England. A series of early books shows what the young woman was thinking about: "The Squirrel Cage" (1912) was an early mid-West revolt from village narrowness; "The Montessori Mother" (1913) was a handbook to "progressive education; and "Hillsboro People" (1915) prepared the way for work in the novel. Obviously she is a conscious, intelligent artist by background and training

(1) p. 266 Pattee op.cit.

The Optimist's Platform

As spokesman for American idealism, Dorothy Canfield stands on a platform composed of such planks as these:

a) Belief in the humanly good aspect of democracy, in civic pride and in the community spirit ("The Bent Twig," 1915) as wholesome influences. (Marise Crittenden in "The Brimming Cup" conducts herself toward her New England village folk in such a way as to illustrate these beliefs. Civic pride is a comparatively recent trait of American character - one for which Willa Cather would find no good use.)

b) Faith in public education. All can and should be educated. ("The Montessori Mother" sort of self-help and individualistic training. She has a chapter on child-raising at the beginning of "Her Son's Wife" that is a triumph of didacticism in art.)

c) Belief in American spirit of organization. (As the French admit American excellence in sport and organization, so does Dorothy Canfield.)

d) Belief in the discipline of work for its own sake. (A sound view of what is probably a frontier heritage.)

e) Belief in American Progress. (It is unnecessary to comment.)

f) Confidence in the validity of domestic loyalty. (This loyalty is usually tested the way the triangle works out in "The Brimming Cup.")

In General

For a realist, Dorothy Canfield handles symbolism very well. It is of the transcendental sort that could easily escape the first reading. So might the carefully-selected documentation. There is no 'lumber.' Her narrative is economical, if sometimes too sure footed, and supplies good peaks of emotional intensity. The character development comes from within, just as Neale Crittenden wants Marise to make her own decision about Marsh, a fellow of 'emancipated' morality. (1) But the style suggests "English Rhetoric and Composition" (1906); there is not enough reverie; it is in a word "straight-laced." With the exception of that splendid novel, "Her Son's Wife," there remains one all-condemning objection to Mrs. Canfield Fisher's work, namely, that it is dull. There is no getting about the difficulty - her writings are too darned wholesome! Carl Van Doren has indicated her contribution (save for the excepted novel): "Doubtless it is to go too far to claim, as certain of her critics do, that she has made a counter-attack upon the assailants of the village and

(1) The Brimming Cup

the established order, but it is sure that she gave comfort to many spirits disturbed by the radical outbursts of 1920." (1) Unquestionably the author gains an historical importance from the steadfast way in which she has set her head against post-war depravity, and, were it not for his perception of unusual merit in "Her Son's Wife," the student would take to heart those familiar lines from the hymnal:

"Where every aspect pleases,
And only man is vile."

"Her Son's Wife" This book is the American novel in full flower. The interest centers in the conflict between a sense of duty based on the intellect and the sense of duty due to innate humanness. Mrs. Bascom, in the beginning, leads a perfectly refined, confident life. She is sure "we only do what we mean to" and that "anger is a poison." (2) But the significance of life changes upon the receipt of a letter from her only son, Ralph. At the end of it, there is a hurriedly scrawled postscript, "Mother, Lottie's not your kind, but she's all right. Ralph." (3) This letter is twice printed with telling effect upon the amazed Mrs. Bascom. The unfortunate marriage overtook Ralph because his mother could not guide him and give him standards without dominating the boy at the same time. The remainder of the

(1) p. 266 Pattee op.cit.
(2) p. 10 Her Son's Wife 2nd ed.
(3) p. 32 Ibid.

book narrates the way in which the situation was met by Mrs. Bascom and how she changed from the smug Puritan-self, the professional teacher-self, to the vital human being developed through a belated motherhood in grandmotherhood. It was necessary to make full use of the novel to justify such a transformation of character at middle-age.

This is the first Mrs. Bascom:

"A slight change in the expression of the waiting women showed that they recognized the teacher's accent as different from the one they would have used. An even slighter shade of satisfaction in Mrs. Bascom's face showed that she knew they had so recognized it." (1)

At the end of the book the same woman can take this attitude toward a most unprepossessing daughter-in-law - "She looked in through the door, as she had looked so many thousand times before; and now she saw standing there a forlorn little phantom, a helpless desolate child, who ought never to have been born, doomed from the hour she drew breath, ignorant, unprotected, warped, stunted ... Had she been standing there all these years waiting for a mother? .. Why, this was not the end at all. It was only, at last, the beginning." (2)

Mrs. Bascom is the great contribution Dorothy Canfield makes to American literature.

(1) p. 9 ibid.
(2) last two pages ibid.

(3) Zona Gale. (1874 -)

Philosophy

With Zona Gale one turns again to the abstract and meets an idealist trying to penetrate beneath the surface in a mystical, Emersonian way. This author is a cross (philosophically) between Cather and Canfield - she is pessimistic about the present but optimistic about the somewhat immediate future. Things are admittedly bad upon the surface but they are really much better underneath. Each individual has an "allotrope" of pure diamond usually obscured by the carbon surface. In fine, "we're hidden people." (1)

"Allotropes"

The 'allotrope' is her central philosophic and artistic idea, largely derived from Professor Alfred North Whitehead. The aim is to relegate scientific knowledge to spiritual truth, an effort that has taken different forms ever since Darwinian days. In literature, a "personality picture" (without the superficial connotation) is to be drawn; an essence is to be captured; every facet is to be turned so as to expose the better allotropic property. The goal is that superawareness of an entire individuality which enables the writer not only to portray the whole, but to suggest the whole by any one of the many parts and thereby to retain proportion. When Barnaby speaks to Leda, "an isolated sensibility warred upon by the still insensible flesh from which it rises," (2) he says, "You're such a

(1) p. 156 Faint Perfume
(2) p. 63 ibid.

thing of Paradise, I wondered, in Prospect, if you were conscious of sex at all. Good Lord, it's only one of the things you know about! You've a thousand contacts with love ..." (1) Occasionally there are curious flashes of imagistic genius: "There he sat without his glasses." (2) This is the way Zona Gale preserves an essence of time - "As one discerning this unstudied detachment, one who, being a woman, knew it well, Mrs. Mead laid upon the crisis the fertile word breakfast. It was enough, and the moment, not yet defined, broke into harmless fragments." (3) Of a look - "His look still on the table, communicated those twenty-six years of striving, for his son, so that they all dangled there in the room, like a gigantic returned calendar." (4)

Satire

There is a definite appeal in the delicate satire that penetrates the harshness of American life; This appeal is far superior to the blunt Lewis method. Leda speaks of the dowdy housewives of Prospect as wearing merchandise, not clothes. (5) An unfeeling mother puts her hands upon her child as though he had fur. (6) Until "Faint Perfume" be read, a person can have small idea of the possibilities within the 'Main Street' theme. "Miss Lulu Bett" (1920) treats this same substance of village tragedy.

(1) p. 74 ibid
(2) lecture note
(3) pp. 5-6 Preface to a Life
(4) p. 10 ibid.
(5) p. 36 Faint Perfume
(6) p. 181 ibid.

Occasional Misfortunes

But Zona Gale's approach to the inner reality of person or event is too difficult to escape occasional misfortune, at least before long practice. The use of scientific jargon is one of the largest stumbling blocks - this upon the receipt of a telegram: "Something of the initial thrill of Morse himself entered into that room; of Marconi: it was a wireless message. And, in Richmiel, as she read, there came a thrill more fundamental than the derived emotion of electricity; perhaps akin to it." (1) Of course, the person familiar with the remarks uttered at the reception of the first Morse message in New York in 1844 cannot fail to snigger at such a passage, but this direct statement of the "thrill" is outside the usual Gale method. It should be considered as a fault cited to prove a virtue. The terms of science must be used sparingly if the following type of absurdity is to be avoided:

"Particles, perhaps, flowing differently from a new vortex; a different wave-length of personality."(2)

Auctorial Theory

Now that the substance of Zona Gale's art has been examined, the theory appears quite consistent. She says that "the process of writing a novel involves:

"(1) The quickening within of something to be expressed.

(2) The nourishing of that impulse .

(3) The development of a technique of expression.

(1) p. 74 Faint Perfume
(2) p. 87 ibid.

All three processes involve both freedom and a selective use of that freedom." (1) And "the function of the novel is to reflect the familiar as permeated with the unfamiliar, to reflect the unknown in its daily office of permeating the known." (2)

Work

Her work has fallen into two distinct parts. "According to Mr. Mencken ...: her earlier 'Friendship Village' popularities,'intrinsically as worthless as a treatise on international politics by the Hon. Gamaliel Harding;' and her later ... criticism. 'Of a sudden, for some reason quite unknown to the deponent, she threw off all that flabby artificiality, and began describing the people about her as they really were. The result was a second success even more pronounced than her first, and on a palpably higher level.' Never, however, has she reached the fine artistry of Willa Cather, or of the later Ellen Glasgow." (3) Undoubtedly, but Zona Gale hints at even greater possibilities.

"Preface to a Life" (1926) and a group of short stories called "Bridal Pond" (copyrighted 1913) show her concerned with the mental breakdowns that lead to insanity. "Lucius Merlin and Lily, his Wife" appeared in the "Yale Review" (4) recently to illustrate continued interest in the same subject. Her transitions into abnormality are psychologically sound and handled

(1) p. 78 American Criticism W.A. Drake ed. Henry Holt N.Y. 1926 essay, "Allotropes" by Zona Gale
(2) p. 267 Pattee op.cit.
(3) p. 267-268 Pattee op.cit.
(4) for Autumn, 1932: p. 101

in excellent literary fashion as well. Possibly the author feels that she is dealing with an all too familiar by-product of modern industrial life, yet the sympathetic critic can but hope for an early return to central human nature.

(4) Elinor Wylie (1887-1928)

Significance of the "The Venetian Glass Nephew"

In the novels of Elinor Wylie one comes upon real achievement in interpretation as well as style. The author's interpretation depends from a rather veiled allegory that is, however, compensatingly rich in connotation. It is possible to say that she uses somewhat too much allegory, but it is never overdone to the extent that Christopher Morley's is underdone in "Where the Blue Begins." The best example is found in "The Venetian Glass Nephew" (1925), in which the marriage of vitality and superficiality leads to misfortune. This book is one of Wylie's "Romances of the Mind," and tells how an expert Venetian glass-blower supplied Cardinal Peter Innocent Bon with a nephew beautifully, fragilely made, but cold and without vital emotion or intelligence. He has only outward charm, he can never be really touched by love, and remains a symbol of unquickened but externally attractive American youth. "Virginio was a poor atomy to mate with this burning and spiritual child of love (Rosalba), who wore a wild beast's pelt above a heart more vulnerable than

a little lamb's ...(1) It was Rosalba's spirit that must inevitably be wounded in this unnatural warfare (of marital adjustment), however brittle Virginio's bones might prove." (2) The youth could stand no deep analysis and when the girl flings "the curtains apart to let the light rush in, he faints upon his pillow, the delicate vibration of the dawn afflicts him like a thunder-stroke."

Toward the end of the story, Rosalba proves that her love is great enough for any sacrifice. Only by submitting to black magic and to transformation into a porcelain figurine may she become a suitable wife for Virginio. This same substance of which he is made cannot nourish plants. They wither away in any such vessel just as they flourish in common day. Here, then, is a profound treatment of marriage and the suggestion that in the common quest for happiness one character is inevitably lost. In this case it is the regrettable loss of a choice spirit, recalling in reverse, Willa Cather's idea of how marriage warps man's life. Furthermore, it is the opposite of Christopher Morley's 'homey' idealism.

The end of Elinor Wylie's book is a superb commentary on 'successful'marriage: "The faces of the lovers are most beautiful and pure; the gentle and

(1) p. 136 The Venetian Glass Nephew
(2) p. 146 Ibid.

elegiac quality of their love appears unmarred by any longing. Having forgotten fear and the requirements of pity, their tenderness becomes a placid looking-glass in which each beholds the other; the mercurial wildness which no longer moves them is fixed behind this transparent screen, lending brightness to the mirrored images.

"At any moment they may awake; Virginio will put on his pearl-coloured greatcoat and wrap an ermine tippet about Rosalba's throat, and the season being winter and very clear and cold, they will hurry to a fashionable pastry cook's to eat whipped cream and wafers." (1)

"The Orphan Angel"

A similar allegorical method is employed in "The Orphan Angel" which illustrates Wylie's suppression of sex in favour of a Shelleyan, etherial love. An ideal friendship develops between the rough sailor and the rescued poet, suggesting that even America can understand the poetic soul. "Mr. Hodge and Mr. Hazard" deals with the universal conflict between the practical and the ideal. Mr. Hazard is the quintessence of all poetry, of Keats, Shelley, Coleridge and the English romantics in general. (Miss Wylie's knowledge of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was very adequate.) Mr. Hodge is "Babbitt," while Tristram and Hilary represent respectively the arrogance and charm of youth.

"Mr. Hodge and Mr. Hazard"

(1) p. 182 ibid.

Because the author has the ability to make the absolutely unreal seem real, she can intentionally place her settings as remote as she wishes from the here and now. "Jennifer Lorn" deals with eighteenth century England and India, satirizing the Englishman's attitude toward woman. Jennifer was a mincing pre-Victorian with no mind of her own. She lived on chivalry and her master's vanity. The book is not comparable to the other three novels.

Poetic prose

A series of quotations will serve to indicate the highly refined prose and the close relation it bears to poetry:

"'And now,' murmured Chastelneuf with obvious regret, gazing dreamily over the housetops, which the descending day had diapered with a changed and more intricate design of shadow - " (1)

"How delicate a contrivance of language must lull the imagination to repose before it may sing or picture to itself, while half-asleep, Rosalba's homecoming!

"This must be spoken in a whisper, dreamed in a meditation, drawn in the palest colours of pearls, set to an accompaniment of reverential music, veiling silence with a silver veil." (2)

(1) p. 123 ibid.
(2) p. 180 ibid.

There is good satire in Wylie somewhat after an improved Cabellian manner; there is the imagism of Zona Gale and the smoothness of Ellen Glasgow. Occasionally "inkhorn terms" or a too feminine concern with pretty dresses detracts for a paragraph, but rather than waste time over such "trivia", the student 'elects' to re-read another passage, and promises to say no more of Elinor Wylie.

"Peter Innocent Bon was about to return to the Republic of Venice; although he had that very day entered upon the eighty-first year of his age, his eyes, blue as veronica flowers, were even now full of a child's tears. His heart was lighter than a flower; indeed, it danced so high and airily and teased the tenuous cord of his mortality with such persistent malice, that he conceived of it as a toy balloon, an azure plaything in pantomime, caught by a thread of gold to stable earth, and germane to the sky." (1) "The Venetian Glass Nephew" is really a short novel (2); it surpasses "A Lost Lady" as that book surpasses the novella "Ethan Frome;" eventually the author will be accorded a deservedly prominent position in American prose and verse.

(1) p. 9 ibid.
(2) It is obvious that the short novel like "A Lost Lady" or "The Venetian Glass Nephew" has a greater range than the "Ethan Frome," novella type.

(5) Christopher Darlington Morley (1) (1890 --)

Familiar Essayist

"Chris" Morley, or "C.D.M", represents a department of literature particularly neglected in America. With the exception of Agnes Repplier, the familiar essay can boast of few other masters. For Morley, the novel is a by-product of this form and consequently it suffers from a lack of unity. The best approach to his writing is biographical.

Life, English Influence and English Style

He was born in 1890 in Haverford, Pennsylvania, of English parents. After graduation from his home-town Quaker College in 1910, contact with the English tradition of letters was renewed by study in England as Rhodes Scholar from Maryland. Morley is therefore familiar with 'insular' ways and frequently expresses himself in a literary slang of British origin. It is not Erskine's flippancy but nearer Chesterton or Stephen Leacock. Although the style appears to be that of the humourist, in reality it is the punning and word-play sort of writing that is linked with a serious purpose and that therefore is outside native literary precedent.

When the author returned from abroad, he started work for Doubleday, Page at Garden City. Shortly after this start in the publishing world, he married and settled happily into domestic life, if one may judge from such work as "Chimney Smoke, Lyrics for Households of Two or More" (1921). His career carried him to the Ladies' Home Journal, to the Philadelphia Evening Public

(1) 363-379 American Nights Entertainment by Grant Overton. Appleton, Doran, Doubleday, and Scribner's N.Y. 1932.

Ledger as columnist, and finally to the New York Evening Post, where he has remained since 1920. Through the early part of his business life he showed a boyish enthusiasm and genuine freshness of view. He "discovered" William McFee and kept after his publishers until the prefatory "Now, about McFee" came to be a by-word and a warning throughout the office. (1) Naturally this youthful naivete and rather "lovable" intensity were modified by the harshness of the New York publishing world.

"The Haunted Bookshop" "Parnassus on Wheels"

But the spirit of it has remained in Christopher Morley's writing. Likely enough, the necessity of making a living in a hard-boiled, metropolitan centre accounts for a good deal of chaff like "The Haunted Bookshop" (1919), a book containing characteristic elements such as book-shops, books, dogs, pipes, George Gissing's name, some Philadelphia background, and the underlying thought that New York is a little mad. The whole is rendered worthless, however, by the introduction of a timely German-spy plot and the perfectly apparent fact that sales were uppermost in the writer's mind. "Parnassus on Wheels" (1917) is about the same idealistic book-seller, Roger Mifflin, and how he, along with the young woman destined to be his wife, peddles good literature to "οἱ πολλοί" and makes them like it. These novels represent his worst and his "fair-to-middling" level; in "Thunder on the Left" (1925) Morley has shown what he is

(1) pp. 374-375 American Nights Entertainment Grant Overton. Appleton, Doran, Doubleday, and Scribner's N.Y. 1932.

capable of doing; this single title gives him a respectable position among American novelists. Perhaps work in New York accounts for his definitely suburban philosophy. He admires the city in an imaginative way, yet the point of view is not that of Erskine's liberated metropolitanism, rather that of the traditionalist cheerfully trying to make a solution. New York City has prevented the writing of more "Thunders."

Urbanity and morality

There is in Morley a pleasant urbanity and sparkle. George (in "Thunder") (1) says, "If anyone had told me, twelve years ago, that it would be so irritating to sleep in the same bed with a pretty woman, I wouldn't have believed it." Yet parallel to this legerity runs a vein of very solid morality: "Time, he said, is life, and life is God; time, then, is little bits of God. Those who waste their time in vulgarity or folly are the true atheists." (2) Christopher Morley as the family man displays the same loyalty to the home that Dorothy Canfield shows as the woman of the home. They share the optimistic, constructive view of life. Give Canfield a little Morley urbanity and she would become a far more appealing writer. She knows whimsicality for children (3) but in her absorption with the serious she forgets to extend it to adults. In these two novelists appear the familiar concepts of disciplined behaviour

(1) p. 46 Thunder on the Left
(2) p. 82 Where the Blue Begins
(3) early parts of The Deepening Stream

and the vitalistic interpretation akin to Erskine's 'love of life' theory (in Helen of Troy) and to Herrick philosophy. In "Where the Blue Begins," dog Gissing discovers that "Every trip is successful when you get home again," (1) that the blue flame in one's own furnace has a "perfect and heavenly tint, the essence of pure" (2) happiness. Morley's philosophy is based on a Pollyanna sort of optimistic defiance. He thinks that there are times when "a crown of thorns should be worn cocked over one ear." (2) Philosophically he is undoubtedly as American as he is English in style.

Criticism

Quite as a matter of course, Christopher Morley's style is considered gay, sparkling, tender, sentimental, or simply boring. "The-Powder-of-Sympathy" manner could not go unchallenged, although its personal popularity has been a great help in journalistic criticism.

T. S. (3) Matthews has phrased the objections well: "It has always been one of the tricks of the personal essayist to take the reader to his bosom; to prattle winningly of his little fads and crotchets; but it is a dangerous trick to attempt, for if we are not immediately won, we are apt to feel that the attempt itself was an impertinence...

(1) p. 214
(2) p. 215
(3) "Christopher Morley" by T. S. Matthews in New Republic vol. 54, p. 167 (March 21, 1928)

"And it is precisely for the uninitiate that Morely the essayist writes. The uninitiate are his public. Anyone with a remembrance of Lamb or Sterne could not fail to detect the shoddy in the fabric of Morley's essays. To the commutors of New York or Philadelphia, however, 'Pipefuls' 'Mince Pie', 'Shandy gaff' and the rest were doubtless a revelation of how appealing a supposedly dry form like the essay could be made."

Matthews further points out that "Where the Blue Begins is "an unstable mixture of fairy tale and sermon" wherein the dogs are too soon forgotten. He calls Christopher Morley an "Angloliterophile" into the bargain. The student is inclined to agree with Mr. Matthews in the cold light of this critic's reason. One circumstance, however, may be advanced in favour of Christopher Morley. If the purely appreciative standard of criticism has any valid use at all, it is in connection with the familiar essay. Matthews's objections concerning the intimate style are equally applicable to the models which he cites.

"Where the Blue Begins"

Insofar as inconsistency goes, "Where the Blue Begins" must bear the brunt of the charge. This thin mixture of allegory, satire and humour didactically served up in an undisciplined way can furnish no defense for itself. It traces the urge to escape and the possibilities of what may be done about that disturbing desire for a romantic 'fling.' The moral has already been mentioned; the humour arises from words rather than from situation and continues in a not unappealing way. It is wrong not

to judge the combination of literary and current slang appreciatively. However, the reader is continually forgetting the canine allegory and then returning to it with unpleasant unexpectedness.

It is in another novel that Christopher Morley appears as the psycho-romantic to excellent advantage.

"Thunder on the Left."

"Thunder on the Left" starts with a children's birthday party in a Long Island home. Martin, ten years old, is host, and the youngsters are playing a game of his called "Stern Parents" (1). Martin realizes that the laughter and seemingly gay conversation of adults is no guarantee of their happiness. Therefore, his wish before blowing out the candles on his cake is to find out how happy grown-ups are, before it is too late. Then the story takes up these same children as adults in a week-end house-party years later. Martin re-enters the story as a strangely natural Mr. Martin . He has retained his child mind and he makes a deep impression upon his former play-mates as a soul of genuine, if unbelievable, simplicity. The man Martin would have become is host under the name of George. Because his wife, Phyllis, was always in love with George's earlier, artistic soul, uncorrupted by the influence of adult, material necessity, she falls in love with this new Mr. Martin, in reality her own husband in youth. George turns for happiness to Joyce, the only one of the group aside from

(1) p. 4

Martin who has been able to retain childhood goodness despite life. Her unusual character brings what looks like a nasty quadrangle to a happy ending, because husband and wife reclaim a vitality and an appreciation of the beautiful enabling them to return to each other's love. Obviously Christopher Morley is no modernist preaching a radical change in marital attitude. He believes that imagination is enough to 'sublimate' Freudian complexes and provide a most satisfying love. His concern is with the imperative need of the adult for continual spiritual refreshment. Sound thought has combined with literary excellence to make "Thunder on the Left" a book of rare imaginative beauty.

(6) John Erskine (1) (1879 --)

The name of John Erskine carries one back to the historical novel and suggests what eventually became of it. This author is a psycho-realist and most modern in many ways; it is of chief interest to inquire into his ideas rather than detail his books. His is no literature of escape but an attempt to see life 'head-on.' He has an adequate body of classical learning that can refute any charge of ignorance. Quite naturally traditional classicists attacked him for his distortion and medievalists criticized the "Galahad" treatment. The rebuttal for his work outlined the defense that a book like "The Private Life of Helen of Troy" dealt nowhere with material touched by classical literature and that the writer was

The Defense

(1) Lectures

merely filling in psychological background implied in but omitted from ancient authors or formal treatments. Indeed it was to be "The Argument of Helen", until business-like publishers insisted upon throwing Erskine in the wrong light for the sake of increased sales. The historical realist follows the same course in an effort to record previously unrecorded personalities. Scott and others of the regular school never got beyond 'personages.' Treatments like Strachey's "Queen Victoria" or Shaw's "Saint Joan" are of the Erskine sort. These writers may not achieve accuracy with any regularity but they certainly represent an advance over the old historical novel.. All this defense was admittedly clever but it availed naught with the critics in question. Within the last few years a falling off in the writer's reputation has been perceptible, traceable no doubt to Erskine's habit of keeping rebuttals up his sleeve until uncomfortable moments and even more to the publishers' growing realization that his work could not be profitably exploited further. The author's interests in piano, poetry, and research are enough, however, to assure him a respectful hearing on his theories. He is an accurate writer and in possession of all the facts, as a popularizer like Robert Sherwood in his "The Road to Rome" is not. Furthermore, it is questionable whether Erskine has committed that heinous sin of "prostituting his art," or whether he has adjusted 'the modern tempo' to classical learning after the best models of 'the New York manner.'

First Impression

The first impression is certainly that the whole thing is a burlesque in the American tradition of humour. There is blunt speech, flippancy, and Mark Twain incongruity. Here is the tabloid situation of brevity:

"Chapter VI"

"'Menelaos,' said Eteoneus, 'I think I've done your wife some injustice, and I'd like to retract several things I said of her - we needn't recall them. I've been talking with her.

"'You mean you've been looking at her', said Menelaos.'I quite understand and your apology is accepted. She has a persuading appearance. You are not the first.'" (1) (End of "Chapter VI.)

Dialogue

The wit and repartee of dialogue is too clever for a pretense at realism. When Galahad returns home from court, the family lunch on steak and onions. Galahad refuses onions. This is a sample conversation:

"'She (Guinevere) is surprising,' said Elaine. 'I judge she has treated you well.'

"'Hasn't she! She says she feels as though I were her own son.'

"'It isn't safe to ask more than that of any woman,' said Elaine. 'How's your father?'

"'All right, I guess. He's off somewhere - I haven't seen him the last three or four days.'

"'I suppose Guinevere feels like a mother to him too.'....

(1) The Private Life of Helen of Troy. Bobbs-Merrill Co. Indianapolis, 1925. (p.295,Chap.VI,Pt.V)

"'I thought you were going to say the queen did the darning for you,' said Elaine. 'That would be the maternal touch.' Galahad detected sarcasm.

"'What's new here?" he said (1)

The diction may in a sense be unreal, yet the last query is very close to a timeless "Quid novi?" The vernacular, where used, corresponds to ageless idioms; elsewhere an excellent command of good English is shown. The style is clear, economical and refreshing in this era of confusion. There is no Andersonian vagueness anywhere in Erskine, neither is there any narrative ability.

Characters

Characters are static and able to carry on their repartee because they know where they stand. In "The Private Life" every point of view is given expression in the persons of five characters. Helen represents eternal female charm and vitality. Love is her destiny and her life but she takes matters stoically. She believes in youthful love because at that age the senses seem to be of the soul. Later the soul may be realized but the intensity is lacking. Menelaos is the practical doer, the ancient Babbitt. Hermione expresses Puritanism in her regard for decorum, Orestes is the Puritan reformer ready to help God polish off his handiwork. Eteoneus, the gate-keeper, believes in the "Treat 'em rough - they love it" doctrine.

Americanism

Erskine is thoroughly modern in his conviction that every age is modern. He even maintains that he will read no book less than fifty years old, since con-

(1) p. 233 Galahad

temporary application, the most living part of it, is destined to die, and before it does, judgment is impossible. He has the Canfield attitude toward Europe - let America break away under her own "Self-Reliance", the duty of the individual. "Sincerity" is a plea to junk outworn standards and move toward this ideal, even though it be unattainable today, a plea to abandon antiquated foolishness like the strict marriage bond. "Uncle Sam" is a portrait of the American mind drawn to refute European criticism. In the course of the historical allegory, Uncle Sam first marries Puritan Priscilla and then his eye is caught by a Scotch-Irish lass. The biography of "our national temperament" (1) is filled out to explain practical idealism. The thing is clever but difficult to handle without monotony. At any rate, Erskine has shown a forthright Americanism and sincerity. His attempt to personalize, 'to vitalize' history is a contribution to this branch of literature and no mere burlesque.

(a) Thornton Wilder (1897 --)

This author's treatment of historical material forms a decided contrast to Thornton Wilder's method. The letter represents an ascetic, metaphysical rebellion from contemporary standards. "The Bridge of San Luis Rey" (1927) is an early product of such reaction. Therein a radial narrative is employed to focus about the bridge between life anddeath. (Oddly enough, the consideration of collectivist theories will show this book to be at least structurally of our time .)

(1) "Foreword" to Uncle Sam.

A year earlier "The Cabala" advanced a stoical Oriental attitude toward life's futility. Wilder is cited here mainly as an example of retreat into the past in contrast to Erskine's advance from the past into his ever-present present. Therefore, Wilder furnishes the proletarian collectivists, of course, with an horrible example of devitalized literature. Naturally they would overlook his radial narrative in "The Bridge of San Luis Rey."

VIII Later Developments

The significant phases of the twentieth century novel have now been considered. There remain some recent developments worth mention and the evidence suggesting that the great Quest for Truth is to be abandoned, that is, the realistic search used as the main thesis thread.

(A) The Proletarians

Edmund Wilson

In May, 1932, Edmund Wilson published in "The New Republic" (1) an article entitled "The Literary Class War." It begins in this way:

"In the fall of 1930, a year after the stock-market crash, there appeared in The New Republic an attack by Michael Gold on Thornton Wilder. Michael Gold is, of course, a Communist and his article was an attempt to arraign Wilder at the bar of the Communist ideology. He declared that Wilder's writings were the poetry 'of a

(1) May 4 1932 issue and the first of the series.

small sophisticated class that has recently arisen in America - our genteel bourgeoisie' and on a plane with 'luxury-hotels, golf, old furniture and Vanity Fair sophistication.' 'The Bridge of San Luis Rey' and 'The Cabala' were among the things which enabled this 'parvenu class to forget its lowly origin in American industrialism' - providing them with 'a short cut to the aristocratic emotions' and disguising 'the barbaric sources of their income, the billions wrung from American workers and foreign peasants and coolies,' letting them 'feel spiritually worthy of that income.'" The idea seemed to be that American literature should be liberated from its burgher authorship and set free to express the labourer's mind.

Class literature in general

Now with the exception of writers like Wharton, Wilder and a few others, the tone of our literature has been anything but aristocratic. Names like London, Norris, Abraham Cahan, Dreiser, Anderson, Poole and the later Dos Passos immediately refute the theory that domination has, at least within a generation, been confined to the middle group. These authors write about the proletarian himself. But that is not enough. The proletarians are to do their own writing. This "reductio ad absurdam" brings one to the proposition that those who cannot write are to produce novels for those who probably cannot read. It is the old question of "literature for the illiterate," and based on

the dubious assumption that "the person who looks at life from the point of view of the exploiting class inevitably distorts it, whereas the person who regards it from the proletarian point of view is capable of accurate and clarifying interpretation." (1) A diapered infant could point out with Wilson that art knows no class distinction, yet V. F. Calverton insists upon protruding his head to this extent: "Their belief (Emerson, Whitman and others) in the common man was a belief in him as a petty bourgeois individualist; our belief must be in him as a proletarian collectivist. In that belief lies the ultimate liberation of American literature - and American life." (2) One can only sympathize with the common man - his doctors will be the death of him yet. Calverton points out ably, however, the cycle and degradation of the "Democratic Dogma" from 1829 to 1929 and also the confusion between Puritanism and middle-class ideas. (3)

The following is by far the most reasonable proletarian statement the student has come upon:

"The class war is not in unthinking obedience to proletarian standards, in complete opposition to bourgeois literature, as Hazlitt makes it. Rather we come to value in past literature and art the human qualities and technical accomplishments desirable for the nourishment of

(1) editorial: Saturday Review of Literature August 6,1932
(2) Book section of Boston Transcript Sat. Oct. 9, 1932. Review: The Liberation of American Literature V.F. Calverton Scribner's N.Y. 1932
(3) "Don't Blame the Puritans" V.F. Calverton Scribner's March 1931

the living elements in society, and that desirability is in no way incommunicable." (1) This amounts to little more than another plea for vital art and it seems to contain the heart of the matter.

The Theory

But the chief literary interest in the movement is the extreme theory of art proclaimed. Gold himself drew fire from his own camp by centering his "Jews Without Money" (autobiographical, at that) about an individual: "the theory was that there should be no protagonist in a real Communist work of art, that the subject should always be the group." (2) Wilson has become interested in the proposal and figures as one of "The Four Marxian Brothers."

Edmund ("Groucho") Wilson
Kenneth ("Zeppo") Burke
John ("Chico") Dos Passos
Malcolm ("Harpo") Cowley (3)

John Dos Passos (1896), or Theory Applied

Dos Passos has carried out the idea in his later writings. The author of "Three Soldiers" was the late romanticist in his portable "ivory tower." With "Manhattan Transfer" (1925), he began to turn away from the literature of despair wherein the individual, although frequently right, usually became the victim of society. He sought to cut lengthwise as well as breadthwise, (4) and developed a discontinuity of narrative akin to vaudeville. (4) The publication of "1919" (1932) made it clear

(1) p. 54 The Modern Monthly vol. VII No. 1 Feb. 1923 "The Literary Front" by Obed Brooks
(2) p. 320 Wilson op.cit.
(3) p. 3 The American Spectator December 1932
(4) p. 437 J.W. Beach The Twentieth Century Novel

that his reportorial style, his newsreel technique and his society as hero were to put him in the proletarian van. Under this banner the individual must accept the group. Since one or two characters cannot represent the group properly, a series of nine biographies are cast into the text and, in all, some fifty different lives are unified for the reader by "the newsreel" in "1919".

The Three Methods

The group novel is managed through this device to correlate time, through the camera-eye to record facts of confused impression, and through the previously mentioned biographical series. Collectivists aim to record not stream of consciousness but stream of life, in short, to present a pageant. Louis Bromfield has tried to keep in step with Dos Passos. "24 Hours" is one of his attempts.

Conclusion

It may be said that all this proletarian talk is merely the formal acknowledgment of a recognized fact, namely, that the living centre of gravity lies in the lower class. Yet it is to re-mix sociology with literature overmuch, to write an "Only Yesterday," to discard character, and to parody the epic, which in any form ought to have"a two-fold theme, a specific human story and a big general problem." (1) There has been interest in epic treatment from Norris, Churchill, Dreiser and Glasgow to Cabell. The present emphasis is merely a swing away from abnormal individuality. Eventually it may produce a satisfactory American expression of the form.

(1) p. 91 Some American Story Tellers F.T. Cooper

(B) The Younger Humanists

It is perfectly obvious that the old search for realistic truth has run its course. Joseph Wood Krutch's "The Modern Temper" (1929) was the last gasp of King Whirl, who was King, "having driven out Zeus," (1) during the twenties. Shortly after the shock of material collapse in 1929, a susurrus was heard about something positive. The nation had had too much negative truth. (2)

The younger humanists, those educated by Professor Babbitt but those who have fallen somewhat off his gold standard, are, at present, one of the forces for a return to law and order. (3) They have appreciation of our literary heritage. They decry objective, factual realism as a Lewis-like distortion of life, feeling that realism turned out to be a loathesome sort of sentimentality and an unfair sampling. Jane Austen's brand that is honest, truthful and equal to the test of time is preferred. Like every one else, they are satiated with muckrake debunking, (4) but seek good in the contemporary American scene. In general this group takes life calmly, stressing the "gospel of beauty" and the necessity of form. It is disturbed by buncumbe in literature and

(1) This quotation from Aristophanes appears on page 1, A Preface to Morals by Walter Lippman MacMillan N.Y. 1929 also.
(2) cp. an editorial called "Too Much Truth" in The Saturday Review of Literature for October 22, 1932.
(3) "As a Man Thinketh" by Harland Hatcher in The Saturday Review of Literature for January 18, 1930
(4) Ernest Poole's The Destroyer (1931) shows the anti-debunking view shared by most persons of the current arcade.

deplores the use of vernacular even in Hemingway. Modified humanism is possibly the keynote for the next few years. America has now been given her first opportunity to come to anything like rest. After her interpreters get through trying one or two more wild panaceas, of necessity a period of literary centrality must result.

IX. "The Great American Novelist"

"Of all the overworked phrases of overworked book reviewers, the phrase, the 'Great American Novelist,' is beyond doubt worn the thinnest from much handling - or mishandling. Continually the little literary middlemen who come between the producers and the consumers of fiction are mouthing the words with a great flourish of adjectives, scareheading them in Sunday supplements or placarding them on posters, crying out, 'Lo, he is here!' or 'lo, there!' But the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing. The G.A.N. is either as extinct as the dodo or as far in the future as the practical aeroplane. He certainly is not discoverable at present." (1) So spake Frank Norris thirty years ago. In the interim America has found "the practical aeroplane," but the "G.A.N." continues to remain in hiding. However, there has been enough development in the novel to permit, by way of review, a guarded statement of what might be expected from the Great American Novelist.

(1) p. 85 The Responsibilities of the Novelist by Frank Norris

Borderlines of the Novel

In tracing the history of the novel it has been apparent that many other fields have been touched. Anderson has verged upon autobiography; Lewis upon journalism; Tarkington upon farce. Eclectics like Cather and Gale have come nearer to the short story technique. Wylie has preferred poetry and Morley the familiar essay. Cabell keeps to myth while Hergesheimer writes much pure fiction. The formal essay is represented by Edman. Canfield and Herrick stay closer to the novel itself. The plasticity of this form accounts in measure for the popularity it enjoys, yet the good novelist must keep closer to centre than have the vagrant writers.

Philosophy

Philosophically, an intelligent confidence in American civilization characteristic of Erskine or Canfield should mark his work. There is no necessity for the author himself to embrace the belief, but an important character or characters should wholeheartedly advance practical American idealism. Others could represent the later turn to Hemingway's creed of the sportsman. The implication is not that a complete break with the past is necessary, not that America must be interpreted "sui generis", but that the approach to human and cultural universality lead through peculiarly native by-paths. According to Goethe, "There is no such thing as patriotic art and patriotic science. Both art and science belong like all things great and good, to the whole world, and can be furthered only by a free and general interchange of ideas

among contemporaries, with continual reference to the heritage of the past as it is known to us." (1) Chauvinistic Americans would do well to consider this quotation.

Setting

Recent epic tendencies emphasize again the importance of an inclusive setting. Possibly the life of Stuart Pratt Sherman contains practical suggestions as to how the theme might be unified. In a life like his the whole country could be made to pivot about a single character or characters, and New York City might serve as the final, properly-subordinated turning-point.

Characters

The "dramatis personae" of such a work would have to include not only the older sectional types but the new American as well - the son of Cather's immigrants. This type, from the fact of its growing significance, would demand detailed and sympathetic treatment. All characters should exhibit a far greater degree of free-will than hitherto permitted by behaviouristic writers of this century.

Individualism vs. Democracy

Individualism and its relationship to democratic averagism is also important. Ellen Glasgow has shown the Cavalier Tradition brought to bay by "vox populi". The great novelist would be concerned with a broader application of the same theme. And a book may be decorated with minor themes after the fashion of the two Richmond writers, provided the major theme is recognized as invaluable

(1) p. 1163 Types of World Literature by P. H. Houston and R. M. Smith. Doubleday, Doran. Garden City, N.Y. 1930.

literary cement. The current trend is to make room for humour as a "sine quā nōn." Although humour is not art, it is impossible to represent a broad canvas of life without humour in some form or another. Canfield suffers from the lack of any quality approximating it.

The Men and Women

The female novelists have generally proved better models in style than the men. Most of them have been better educated and are more anxious to turn out superior workmanship. Men like Anderson have spent their energies upon experiment. Prose needs the cadence of Glasgow or Wylie, not the rhythm of Andersonian hypnotism. It must be above the expositional level of Canfield, the flippancy of Erskine, or the vernacular of Lewis. Hemingway fails when he succeeds in recording the inarticulate. Better as a steady diet Erskine's clarity than the "the corn-fed mystic's" confusion. There is a power to "Thunder on the Left" prose, a sparkle to Glasgow and an imagism in Wylie and Gale that stand the "G.A.N." in good stead as models. Most of all, he must catch a Herrick vitality, a Gale sensitiveness to the essence of life. Today "The Great American Novelist" has the advantage of an excellent position for perspective. Much ground has been cleared since Norris recorded his worries, and it is no longer necessary to consult only the ancients of Europe for precedent. American talent has ample opportunity to develop skill from a study of native achievements in the field of the twentieth century novel.

Prose Style

The American Novel of Today and Tomorrow

As to the future: "The chief concern of the American novel of tomorrow will be to uncover the beauty of our essential commonplace living as the novel of today has triumphantly uncovered its ugliness. To uncover beauty not by denying ugliness-- the novel of today has made that forever impossible -- but first by accepting all of life, something which we in America have never been willing to do either in art or in life; and then by a new selectiveness. It is only after a broadly affirmative art arises that a really selective art becomes possible. The modern realistic novel performs the inestimable service of extending our admissions, our affirmations. It has chosen to affirm the commonplace, the sordid, the ugly, because that is most obvious; also it is far easier to record; is, in fine, the natural gesture away from sentimentality and hypocrisy and smugness. Of course the gesture has been too violent." (1)

(1) pp. 152-153 Portage, Wisconsin and Other Essays

XI. ANNUAL REVIEW of PERIOD by TITLES

By way of convenient review , a list of representative titles by years is added. These titles are not always novels. Several 'best sellers' are starred in order that the popular trend may be followed.

* * *

I89I: "Main Travelled Roads", Hamlin Garland

I892: "Maggie, A Girl of the Streets", Stephen Crane

I893: "The Cliff-Dwellers," H.B.Fuller

I894: "Crumbling Idols," Hamlin Garland

I895: "The Red Badge of Courage,"Crane
"Rose of Dutcher's Coolly," Garland
"With the Procession," Fuller
"A Kentucky Cardinal," James Lane Allen
"The Man Who Wins," Robert Herrick

I896: "The Damnation of Theron Ware," Harold Frederic
"The Survival of the Fittest; Philosophy of Power," Ragner Redbeard

I897: "The Choir Invisible", Allen

I898: "When Knighthood Was in Flower," Charles Major

I899: "McTeague," Frank Norris
"The Gentleman from Indiana," Booth Tarkington
"David Harum," Edward Noyes Westcott

I900: "To Have and To Hold," Mary Johnston
* "Alice of Old Vincennes," Maurice Thompson (best seller,I90I)
"The Heart's Highway," Mary E.Wilkins Freeman
"Monsieur Beaucaire," Tarkington
"The Reign of Law," Allen
"The Strenuous Life," Theodore Roosevelt
"Son of the Wolf," Jack London
"Sister Carrie," Theodore Dreiser
"A Man's Woman," Frank Norris
"The Web of Life," Herrick
"The Hoosiers," (Indiana writers) Meredith Nicholson
"My Literary Friends and Acquaintances," W.D.Howells
"The Voice of the People," Ellen Glasgow

I90I: "The Tory Lover," Sarah Orne Jewett
"The Cavalier," George W.Cable
"The Octopus," Frank Norris
"The Great God Success," David Graham Phillips

*
I902: "The Virginian," Owen Wister (best seller,I903)
"The Blazed Trail," Stewart Edward White
"The Call of the Wild," Jack London
*"Mrs. Wigs of the Cabbage Patch," Alice Hegan Rice
"The Conqueror," Gertrude Atherton
"The Pit," Frank Norris
"The Battle-Ground," Ellen Glasgow

I903: "The Ambassadors," Henry James
"The Responsibilities of the Novelist," Frank Norris
"April Twilights," (poetry) Willa Cather

I904: "The Silent Places," Stewart Edward White
"The Eagle's Shadow," James Branch Cabell
I905: *"The House of Mirth," Edith Wharton (best seller,I906)
"The Memoirs of an American Citizen," Herrick
"The Reign of Guilt," David Graham Phillips

I906: "The Jungle," Upton Sinclair
"Coniston," Winston Churchill
"English Rhetoric and Composition," Dorothy Canfield
(not a novel)

I907: "Light-Fingered Gentry," David Graham Phillips

I908: "The Worth of a Woman," David Graham Phillips
"Together," Herrick
"Friendship Village," (stories) Zona Gale

I9I0: "The Husband's Story," David Graham Phillips

I9II: "Ethan Frome," Edith Wharton
"Jennie Gerhardt," Dreiser
*"The Sick-Abed Lady, and Other Stories," Eleanor Hallowell Abbott
I9I2: "The Financier," Dreiser
"O Pioneers !" Willa Cather

I9I3: "Pollyanna," Eleanor H.Porter
"The Flirt," Tarkington
"The Montessori Mother," Dorothy Canfield
"The Custom of the Country," Edith Wharton
"Domnei," James Branch Cabell

I9I4: "Our Mr. Wrenn," Sinclair Lewis
"Penrod," Tarkington
"The Titan," Dreiser

I9I5: "Spoon River Anthology," Edgar Lee Masters
"The Genius'" Dreiser
"The Harbor," Ernest Poole
"Hillsboro People," (short stories) Dorothy Canfield
"The Lay Anthony," Joseph Hergesheimer
("The fourteen years"are up !)

I9I6: "Penrod and Sam," Tarkington
*"Seventeen," Tarkington

I9I7: "A Son of the Middle Border," Garland
"Three Black Pennys," Hergesheimer
"Parnassus on Wheels," Christopher Morley
*"Mary 'Gusta," Joseph C.Lincoln
"Susan Lennox: Her Fall and Rise," David Graham Phillip
I9I8: "My Antonia," Willa Cather
"Birth," Zona Gale (in the realistic vein now)

I9I9: "Java Head," Hergesheimer
"Linda Condon," Hergesheimer
"Free Air," Sinclair Lewis
"The Haunted Bookshop," Morley
"Jurgen," Cabell
"Beyond Life," Cabell
"Winesburg,Ohio," Sherwood Anderson

I920: "Poor White," Anderson
*"Main Street," Lewis (best seller,I92I)
"Hey,Rub-A-Dub-Dub," Dreiser
"The Age of Innocence," Edith Wharton

I92I: "Alice Adams," Tarkington
"Mrs.Farrell," W.D.Howells
"Nets to Catch the Wind," (poetry) Elinor Wylie
"The Brimming Cup," Dorothy Canfield
"Three Soldiers," John Dos Passos

I922: *"Babbitt," Lewis
"A Book About Myself," (introspective biography)
Theodore Dreiser
"One of Ours," Willa Cather
"Where the Blue Begins," Morley

I923: "Faint Perfume," Zona Gale
"Many Marriages," Anderson
"A Lost Lady," Willa Cather
*"Black Oxen," Gertrude Atherton

I924: "Waste," Herrick
"in our time," Ernest Hemingway

I925: "An American Tragedy," Dreiser
"Dark Laughter," Anderson
"Arrowsmith," Lewis
"The Venetian Glass Nephew," Elinor Wylie
"Thunder on the Left," Morley
*"The Private Life of Helen of Troy," John Erskine
(best seller,I926)
"The Professor's House," Willa Cather
"Manhattan Transfer," Dos Passos

I926: "Richard Kane Looks at Life," Irwin Edman
"Preface to a Life," Gale
"My Mortal Enemy," Cather
"The Romantic Comedians," Ellen Glasgow
"Her Son's Wife," Canfield
"Death Comes to the Archbishop," Cather
"The Sun Also Rises," Hemingway
"The Orphan Angel," Wylie
"Chimes," Herrick

I927: "The Plutocrat," Tarkington (his answer to "Babbitt")
"The Financier" is revised.
*"The Bridge of San Luis Rey," Thornton Wilder
(best seller, I928)
"Elmer Gantry," Lewis
"Oil," Upton Sinclair
"The Cream of the Jest," Cabell
"Tar," (introspective autobiography) Anderson
"Chains," (short stories of "the inevitabilities of our fate") Dreiser

I929: "The Modern Temper," Joseph Wood Krutch
"A Preface to Morals," Walter Lippman
"A Farewell to Arms," Hemingway
"Sanctuary," (written) William Faulkner (pub.I93I)
"They Stoop to Folly," Glasgow
"Hudson River Bracketed," Wharton

I930: "The Deepening Stream," Canfield

I93I: "Shadows on the Rock ," Cather
"The Wet Parade," Upton Sinclair

I932: "These Restless Heads," Cabell
"Berlin," Hergesheimer
"The Sheltered Life," Glasgow
"Beyond Desire," Anderson
"The End of Desire," Herrick
"Obscure Destinies," Cather
"The Gods Arrive," Wharton
"Anne Vickers," (serially in Red Book,pub.I933) Lewis
"Swiss Family Manhattan," Morley
"Death in the Afternoon," Hemingway
"I9I9," Dos Passos

XII SUMMARY

I. Introduction

(A) Scope

The thesis is to emphasize those writers whose significant work has appeared in the twentieth century.

(B) Critical Difficulties

(1) Of Definition

Rather than attempt what would probably prove an unsatisfactory definition of the American Novel, the student prefers to chart the course of development and indicate a possible ideal.

(2) Of Contemporary Critical Confusion

This has minimized the interpretative value of the bibliography and made course lectures of greatest importance.

(3) Of Contemporary Lack of Perspective

Suppression and 'Blurb' account for a good deal of it. But a work of art must take its place in Professor Woodberry's "temporal series." Therefore the critic should do the best he can with contemporary material.

(C) Critical Standard of Thesis

(1) Content

In regard to the material at hand, it is important to approach literary criticism proper through the historical avenue. Such an approach can best record the changing American reality since 1900 and the changing effects of this reality upon the art of American writers. This, in short, is the chief concern of the thesis. The proposition is that American civilization cannot be proved

validly until a satisfactory solution to the great test is found. This great test is the satisfactory economy of a fully-populated country.

Biography can take care of itself.

The American development has been peculiar in its acuteness, its tardiness, its large scale and in its frontier possibilities.

Thus far, two unsatisfactory escapes from reality have been used: "The idyllic dream escape" and "the nature escape." Throughout the scope of the thesis the Literary Quest has been for Truth of a spiritual nature, for many reasons identified with the material, however.

(2) Function

The function of criticism is conceived to be 'synthetic,' that is, comprehensive of the other six functions wherever they may fall into proportion. The student laments any unfortunate implication in this term. As an antidote to the times, some effort is made to redress the balance in favour of old-fashioned judicial criticism.

(D) Adequacy of the Novel as an Art-Form and as an Expression of Life

(a) Objections (chiefly Humanistic)

1) The Charge of Formlessness

This charge is groundless in regard to work influenced by the short story tendency, a tendency in

conjunction with eclecticism making for a decidedly unified art. The charge is, however, applicable to the mishandled epic or the straggling 'three-decker'.

2) Charge of Purely Destructive Standards

It is not always possible to find construction and destruction in the same writer. In this modern instance, destructive criticism was highly important. Now let others rebuild.

3) Trampling 'Verbal Decorum' Underfoot

The effort of the romantic genius to attain originality in this way is, for the most part, regrettable. Sinclair Lewis furnishes a warning. So does William Faulkner. Sherwood Anderson's writing illustrates the best application of Wordsworthian theory.

4) Photographic Realism

This is no doubt partially due to the influence of the cinema. At any rate, it is unsound and directly opposed to the best interests of art. It may be regarded as a preliminary to proportioned selectivity.

5) "The Cult of Vertigo"

Sherwood Anderson's hypnotic style must be used in "extreme moderation".

6) Advantages

The flexibility of the novel permits it to adapt elements from other forms. This flexibility and scope make the novel especially suited to record the

greater complexity of modern life.

7) Outer Control

Behaviourism, etc., has played "old Gosberry" with characters. Intelligent free-will must be again emphasized.

II. How the Quest Begins

(A) European Antecedents

Since American literature has been going through a naturalistic battle long since fought out in France, it is better to give short, specific attention to the nineteenth century European field, however superficial such paragraphs may seem to the thorough student of that period, than to make meaningless references from time to time in a supposedly impressive way.

1) Zola

Of interest to the American novelist:

his range of character from highest to lowest

his mass of detail

his specialized vocabulary

2) Flaubert

Of interest to the American novelist:

"sickly kitchen smells"

objectivity

inevitability

style - better than most naturalists

3) The Brothers Goncourt

Parallels in the American novel:

their objectivity from science

social historians of the present

4) Hardy

Thomas Hardy's writing appeared in "Harper's" during the nineties and acted as an intellectual bridge for European ideas. His stories of Wessex peasants in the hands of overwhelming fate suggest his dilution of the French, which was further weakened by native American editorship.

(B) Domestic Continuation

1) Hamlin Garland

"Crumbling Idols" (1894), a plea for "veritism" or the Truth

2) Stephen Crane

Style was the man. His 'associative genius' gave forth vivid 'colour imagism'. His selection, his short, staccato sentence and his refusal to use anything like a moralistic plot further account for the importance of this unusual reporter, this transitional figure.

3) Frank Norris

Norris continues with greater force the Garland idea: "By God, I told them the

truth." He reflects "The Strenuous Life" in his 'blonde-beast', Nietzschean characters. He is a believer in the American epic, dislikes 'local discolouration', and prepares the way for muckraking.

III. The Concomitant Quest for Illusion:

The Historical Romance (1896-1902) was partly local colour on a larger scale, partly a result of Stevenson's writing and partly a result of a new American consciousness of the historical heritage. The Spanish-American War gave it a fillip in one way, yet more directly this war helped to end the fad because it showed that adventure might be had in 'real' Rooseveltian life. Norris's truth formula pointed the way to muckraking. With the end of "Waverley Romance", the country entered upon an economic, social and political condition that has merited serious criticism from that time to the present.

IV. "The Strenuous Life" of "The Muckraker" (1900-1910)

Theodore Roosevelt supplied "The Strenuous Life". S.S. McClure founded the genre - "the literature of exposure".

The theory was that since man was naturally good, to draw evil to his attention was to correct it.

a) "Hard-boiled"

The Nietzschean cult of super-man was a final effort to establish man's superiority over his irresistable machine.

b) "Soft-boiled"

Nature and Gene Stratton Porter supplied the misty-eyed, sentimental touch.

1) Jack London

The idea that nature is 'red in tooth and claw' continued. London is one of many personifications of "The Strenuous Life".

2) Upton Sinclair (The Muckrakers)

Out-and-out propagandist. The method is to imply the good by showing up the bad, usually in the treatment of some actual incident.

3) David Graham Phillips

This writer represents the fusion of Rooseveltian strenuousness with Sinclair muckraking. His emphasis is upon the muckrake phase of what was flowering as the problem novel.

Phillips believed in Democracy Triumphant and wrote twenty-three novels in ten years to support his view. Many of these focused upon the spiritual and mental poverty of the upper-class women. He had no literary worth.

The Problem Novel is marked by:

1) an obtrusive editorial point of view
2) a thin, concrete problem to solve
3) major emphasis upon this problem

It went out of fashion by 1918, but in its less obvious variations it has exerted a large influence quite generally unacknowledged.

V. Variations of the Problem Novel

Through the transition of social criticism, the problem novel carries along work initiated by the muck-rakers. Some of these aspects are the political, the economic, and the social. From a literary standpoint, smug Puritan respectability is eventually attacked, but not in concert until H. L. Mencken marshalls his forces after the War to "rail at idiots".

Parrington says only James Branch Cabell and Edith Wharton escaped the influence of the Problem Novel. As will be pointed out, Edith Wharton did not quite escape.

1) Winston Churchill

A "representative ... conscientious, middle-class romantic", says V. L. Parrington.

Despite Churchill's historico-romantico trilogy on the growth of America, he should be regarded as a problem novelist. In this field his Progressive background lends him some substance of authority. He deals with political and economic problems chiefly.

2) Robert Herrick

This writer is a 'vitalist' and a continual re-valuer of 'success'. The Competitive Economic System underlies all his work.

"Chimes", a book of Herrick's Chicago University background, is a 'college exposure' novel of an amazingly good sort. It is an example of what

merit an accomplished author can give to the stock problem product.

Herrick is too intellectual for the many and too didactic and heavy for the few. He does, however, deserve more recognition than has been accorded him, because he developed the problem novel to perfection - at which point it is very close to first-class literature.

3) Ernest Poole

This author brings out Economic Determinism in "The Harbor", a book showing the geographic and spiritual significance of New York harbor upon the lives of thousands of persons. This geographic theme is important, since Americans have never utilized it in its human implications as have European writers.

4) Irwin Edman

"Richard Kane Looks At Life" marks the problem novel at philosophic high-tide. It takes a characteristic post-war youth through his spiritual adventures. The form approaches a sort of modern Platonic dialogue. The necessity of vitalizing experience through the development of taste and the danger of merely looking "at" life are stressed. The narrative, to be sure, is nothing more than a sausage-chain, yet the book has worth.

5) Edith Wharton, or Old-World Gentility at Bay. Edith Wharton is a problem novelist in artistic masquerade. She is concerned with a number of recurrent themes that form the main substance of her work. She is too clever a craftsman to emphasize these themes in the traditional problem fashion - undoubtedly the reason she has never been considered a problem novelist - yet they unquestionably "place" her in this category.

Recurrent Themes (usually connected with an out-worn social code)

1) Divorce: Mrs. Wharton believes that the double standard eliminates the necessity for divorce.
2) Cults: particularly the absurd female variety is exposed satirically.
3) Money: needed to regulate life tastefully, not for power.
4) Crudity, Family and Honour: Crudity usually comes from the Mid-West. Family name and Honour must be protected.

All this is commentary,
not interpretation.

"Ethan Frome" This excellent novella (with its characteristic 'frame' and 'focus') is included because of its unusual mechanical merit and because it represents a phase of the novel

proper. Other aspects of the same phase are the short novel or the 'novel demeuble.' "Ethan Frome" is based on the tragedy of defeated tragedy and shows Mrs. Wharton's perfection of the James legacy.

In general, her work is marked by sure-footed plots rather than action, by neo-classic characters (in pattern) and by neo-classic subplots. In her detachment she is a smug "dea ex machina" contemplating the perfect working of her literary gadgets.

VI. Through the War to "The Lost Generation"

(A) Preface

The Problem Novelists looked "at" life. The deeper current of American life itself is better represented by Theodore Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson and Sinclair Lewis. These writers are a part of their reality.

1) Theodore Dreiser

The difficulty in treating this writer is to weed away superfluous material.

Life - poverty, repression, and a large German immigrant family explain Dreiser's effort 'to compensate' himself. He turned away from the religious dogma of his father at an early age, but retained his mother's peasant intellect and mysticism. Journalistic training accounts for much of his style.

Philosophy - Dreiser in youth holds to Spencerian unity, flux and purpose. In "maturity" he embraces Haeckel's unity, flux and chance, together with considerable behaviouristic, "biochemical" and Freudian reinforcement.

Most of his characters are "lobsters" or "squibs" as they prey or as they are preyed upon. He usually exhibits an intense sympathy for betrayer and betrayed.

Dreiser's mind is confused, innocent and moralistic (in a somewhat different way.) He is an untrained, for the most part unimaginative peasant wholly disillusioned on week-days and blubberingly sentimental on Saturday night.

His faults are many and serious:

1) monotonous themes of power and lust
2) inability to master "the great canvas"
3) prolixity (documented documentation)
4) unconscious, pathetic humour
5) frightful style

Yet the man is touchingly sincere. This quality makes George Hurstwood (in "Sister Carrie") and Jennie Gerhardt his most effective creations.

T.K. Whipple's appraisal is that Dreiser's importance is chiefly historical, that he has been magnified out of all proportion by comparison with Rooseveltian literature.

2) Sherwood Anderson, a "Corn-Fed Mystic"

Upon this writer "The Spoon River Anthology", Freud and Walter Whitman have had affect. His life has been the source for a very large part of his writing. Anderson's importance springs not from his novels but from his shorter forms, through which he has exercised a literary influence upon two generations.

His concern is with the machine and the attendant human frustration. As Confusion's High Priest, he has shown the futility of escape and has suggested philosophic primitivism, (the return to nature) and kindred other fatuities. His symbolism is obvious.

On the other hand, there is no gainsaying the man's splendid sincerity and idealism about the body and soul. His experiments in 'timeless' narrative, hypnotic rhythm (based upon the wheel of the machine) and his vernacular heightened to a sort of Robert Frost 'colloquial rhythm' deserve permanent acknowledgment.

3) Sinclair Lewis,"a Cantankerous Hick"

This man represents another aspect of the post-war mind, that of the 'smart alec'. Cabell, Nathan, Mencken and others comprise this "Smart Set".

Philosophically, Lewis personifies "negation canonized as the one positive virtue". This is partly due to the influence of journalism, which dulls interpretation by its tradition of indifference toward facts, which emphasizes opportunism and sensationalism. These qualities manifest themselves in Lewis's work as follows:

1) motion-picture technique of a poor sort
2) mental photograph
3) 'mucker' literary pose
4) distortion
5) an "American tempo" geared to cinematographic speed
6) caricatures instead of characters
7) an unusually good mimetic talent
8) 'blood and thunder'

He may be of some interest to later sociologists, but otherwise his entire cultural contribution may be summed up in the two titles, "Main Street" and "Babbitt".

VII. "The Lost Generation" Itself

(1) This generation comprises those young persons influenced by the War, either through actual combat or indirectly by the attendant collapse of moral standards.

"These Sad Young Men" are, for the most part, Anti-Puritan, Anti-New England and Anti-moral. At best, they are "disillusioned pessimists".

(2) Ernest Hemingway

"Left Bank" Hemingway finally salvaged some shoddy values out of the War. He came to believe that passion at least mattered, that pluck or the sportsman's code was all right.

Left-over cruelty and disillusion are seen in such interests as bull-fighting, fishing, hunting and incessant 'boozing'. But no 'values' or escapes ever really alter "The Lost Generation" attitude that 'life is like that'.

Hemingway has done American literature a service by showing that so-called "Dirt" may have artistic value, provided it be significant to a dignified theme.

(3) William Faulkner

"Sanctuary" carries naturalism to its "most horrific" estreme. The nodal narrative method is well used to promote confusion. Otherwise, Faulkner makes Hemingway seem like William Dean Howells.

(4) Elizabeth Maddox Roberts

This author is not fully treated. She is included for chronological reasons with "The Lost Generation" and because her point of view is quite in contrast.

"The Great Meadow" is a pioneer, American epic of the Revolutionary period. The story re-tells the

Enoch Arden adventure in a way that is far superior to previous historical novels. Diony represents Tidewater civilization, whilst her first and third husband, Berk Jarvis, is the typical frontiersman. A life-like idiom, apparently peculiar to the author, puts most of the dialogue upon a high plane, although it is occasionally overdone.

Miss Roberts seeks a return to 'the good earth' and the primitive, or at least that is the implication of "The Great Meadow".

A Recipe for the Historical Novel:

Since every age is modern in the sense that an intelligent person of one period can usually best understand an intelligent person from another period, and since abstract ideas are the least perishable of all, it seems fitting to make an intelligent person the focal point for the historical novel. His impressions of primitive fellows would be sufficient. Why not make some one like William Byrd of Westover the chief character in an American pioneer epic? Realism has a fertile and fallow historical field, now that "Waverley Romance" is out of the way.

VIII. A Number of Writers and Their Work

(A) The Escapists

1) James Branch Cabell "Mundus vult decipi"

Mr. Cabell assumes that the "demi-urge", which is the ego-impulse to expansion, is an all powerful force-producing illusion. He makes his escape down the "road to laughter", continually pointing out discovered failure.

His content in the eighteen volumes of "The High History" of Dom Manuel is a series of episodes in a biography of the spirit. Of narrative there is none.

The Cabellian style is something of an accomplishment; indeed, it is Cabell himself. The 'contrapuntal prose' has distinction, clarity, beauty, symmetry, tenderness (at times), a truth, urbanity (sometimes broad humour instead), and considerable 'smartness'.

A relative of the author, Branch Cabell, is "by no means sure this curious 'tour de force' was worth performing; but (he is) unshakably convinced that (he) 'brings it off' to a nicety".

2) Joseph Hergesheimer

Hergesheimer's liking for colour, sensation, action, "the stuffs of life", ravishing females, etc., may be explained by his early Quaker background and by the fact that he wrote without a publisher for fourteen years.

His characters are the projection of his day-dreams. They are static. His historical method is mechanical. He abuses Stephen Crane's use of colour and Henry James's style. Were he a better artist, he would be considered an historical novelist.

3) Willa Cather

Miss Cather has a background of the Nebraskan, immigrant pioneer. She is a first product of the Western university.

Philosophically, she believes that illusion in this life is inevitable. Only a well-timed death can prevent it. Her theme is idealism and what happens to it in this 'vale of tears'. Roman Catholicism and primitivism offer some resource, however.

Since to her, art is "only a way of remembering youth", her narratives are fittingly reminiscent. Her strength lies in her eclectic style, in the "novel demeuble", and in her ideal pessimism.

Miss Cather's characters include immigrants, Indian cliff-dwellers, farmers, railroad men, college professors and a great many artists. Her settings are correspondingly inclusive, covering adequately North America with the exception of New England and the central South. Her literary accomplishment in the short novel is by no means insignificant.

(B) One Typically American Novelist: Newton Booth Tarkington

Tarkington is no interpreter but an actual specimen of American averagism. He follows the "folksy", Indiana school of James Whitcomb Riley. His work has been artificial historical romance, superficial 'social

studies', or shallow treatment of the adolescent.

From Mark Twain comes the picaresque 'cut-up' and the concern over homely American crudities. But the vitality of the frontier Middle West no longer exists to inspire Tarkington as it did Twain.

From William Dean Howells comes the democratic smugness , but Tarkington cannot supply Howell's urbanity and knowledge.

(C) Intelligent Optimists

1) Ellen Glasgow

This writer has made a complete analysis of the South by generations since the Civil War. Every aspect of Victorianism and Modernism has been sketched in admirable literary fashion.

Glasgow plots are too coincidental.

Glasgow characters have been criticized because they seem to fall into inevitable patterns. This is because the literate South is made up of judges, lawyers, and "sheltered lives" to a large degree.

The author is a painter and no photographer. She knows the truth and how it may best be tempered by kindly satire.

Her style has an unrivalled Addisonian excellence.

Her "capacity for intelligent criticism of life" enables her to penetrate completely the spirit of the South. Literary excellence combines with this penetration to give Ellen Glasgow a place of importance in American letters.

2) Dorothy Canfield, An Ideal Optimist

Dorothy Canfield carries optimism and intelligence as far as they will go together. Her views include everything hopeful that has ever been said about America -- sifted thoroughly by 'good sense'. Unfortunately, she is "too darned wholesome" and serious.

Everything in her work is significant, sure footed and grammatical. An ability to develop splendid peaks of emotional intensity rescues her from mere correctness. "Her Son's Wife" represents the American novel at the full flower of character development.

3) Zona Gale

Philosophically, Zona Gale stands between Dorothy Canfield and Willa Cather - she is pessimistic about the present but optimistic about the immediate future.

She believes that "the function of the novel is to reflect the familiar as permeated with the unfamiliar, to reflect the unknown in its daily office of permeating the known".

As the "allotrope" of coal is a diamond, so beneath the surface of each individual there lies a hidden goodness. Only by representing life or character as an organic whole may true proportion and beauty be achieved.

Zona Gale's style is rich in imagism. Her style also contains delicate satire. Perhaps there is too much scientific jargon in it.

Her work falls sharply into two periods: the worthless "Friendship Village" stage and the later, splendid criticism of small lives.

4) Elinor Wylie

"The Venetian Glass Nephew" shows to advantage Elinor Wylie's interpretative and stylistic ability. This book is a remarkably profound study of modern American youth and modern marriage decked out as a beautiful, eighteenth-century allegory. In the work of the late Miss Wylie remote settings serve to heighten the contemporary applications.

"The Orphan Angel" illustrates the author's emphasis upon etherial, Shelleyan love rather than upon threadbare 'sex'.

Throughout her books run unusually beautiful poetic prose, good satire, something of Zona Gale's imagism, something of Ellen Glasgow's smoothness and only a few too many "inkhorn" terms. Her achievement is of a high order.

5) Christopher Darlington Morley

Morley represents the traditionalist cheerfully seeking the modern solution. He is a familiar essayist, English in style but American in optimistic view. Urbanity and morality are combined to emphasize home, books, bookshops, dogs, pipes and suburban pleasure.

Although "Where the Blue Begins" is an unfortunate mixture of thin allegory, satire and sermon, although "The Haunted Bookshop" represents a "pot-boiling" phase of his work, "Thunder on the Left" has a psycho-real merit of great beauty. It reverses the "Jurgen" theme by plunging the central character from childhood forward into middle-age instead of backward into youth.

Much hostile criticism of Morley's familiar essays is unsound because this form is the one proper sphere for an appreciative standard.

6) John Erskine

This writer is a sound classical scholar who has been thrown into a sensational light by his publishers. He sees every age as modern. Consequently his effort has been to illuminate that more intimate side of classical characters omitted by the ancients. These characters are intended to be static, because they know exactly where they stand in relation to life. Erskine believes in American "Self-Reliance" and sees life 'head-on' in the best fashion of sophisticated New York.

a) Thornton Wilder is an excellent contrast to Erskine. Wilder rebels against the present and escapes into the past in an ascetic, metaphysical, non-vital way. He is the butt of Proletarian critics, who seem to forget that at least the radial method employed in "The Bridge of San Luis Rey" is a part of their own artistic theory.

IX. Later Developments

(A) The Proletarians

Edmund Wilson has a competent article treating Michael Gold's attack upon Thornton Wilder as a "luxury writer" catering to an effete bourgeoisie. But except for Edith Wharton and Wilder, American literature since 1900 affords ample evidence that proletarian-minded writers have been at work. Any suggestion that proletarians, as yet uneducated, do their own writing is a "reductio ad absurdam". It is perfectly obvious that art knows no class distinctions.

John Roderigo Dos Passos, in his later work, is an example of Proletarian Artistic Theory applied. His aim is to record the group, not the individual; to cut lengthwise as well as breadthwise; to use discontinuity of narrative unified by the newsreel, the camera-eye close-up, and a series of short biographies.

Proletarian theory represents an extreme swing away from individualism in all its abnormal implications to the group. It is likely to mean no more than fictionized social history in its present form, although the

arrow points to a satisfactory epic.

(B) The Younger Humanists

The Younger Humanists are those educated by Professor Irving Babbitt who have fallen somewhat off the gold standard. They are an important indication of an early return to literary law and order. Their attitude may be summed up as follows:

1) appreciation of our literary heritage
2) criticism of factual realism as a distortion of life
3) criticism of debunking extremes. Quest for positive good
4) they take life calmly, stressing the gospel of beauty and the necessity of form
5) they deplore the use of the vernacular, even in the writings of Ernest Hemingway

X. "The Great American Novelist"

The "G.A.N." is a much abused and equally elusive figure. Possibly his qualities may be best suggested in a somewhat negative way:

Sinclair Lewis	verges upon	journalism
Booth Tarkington	" "	farce
Willa Cather	" "	the short story
Elinor Wylie	" "	poetry
Christopher Morley	" "	the familiar essay
Irwin Edman	" "	the formal essay

James Branch Cabell verges upon myth
Joseph Hergesheimer " " pure fiction
Sherwood Anderson " " autobiography

Robert Herrick and Dorothy Canfield stay closer to the novel proper, which is essential, although plasticity is one advantage of the form.

Philosophically, the "G.A.N." must advance Practical American Idealism, if not directly, at least through some central character.

His setting must be fairly inclusive of all the American scene, perhaps unified through a life like that of Stuart Pratt Sherman.

His representative characters must exhibit more intelligent free-will; they should certainly include the second-generation, hyphenated American; one character should represent individualism versus democratic averagism.

Any broad treatment must make room for humour in one of its many forms.

His style must be above Anderson's hypnotic trickery, Canfield's expositional level, Erskine's flippancy, and Lewis's vernacular. It should have something of Gale's imagism, Glasgow's smoothness, Cather's eclecticism and Cabell's polish. The "G.A.N." can look

to female novelists for style, in the main, and to male novelists for experimentation.

"The "G.A.N." will be expected to achieve a broadly affirmative, selective art that can show the beauty of American life as a whole without blinking unpleasant aspects of it. Such "great expectations" are less extravagant when it is remembered that American art will soon have its first opportunity to come to a normal state of mature rest.

XIII. Sources and Bibliography.

Due to contemporary difficulties in criticism, most of the bibliographical material has offered little more than factual assistance. Indeed, many of the books cited are valueless. The few that have proved helpful are indicated; these, particularly Fred Lewis Pattee's "New American Literature", are of great importance to anyone entering the field for the first time. Works unread are so listed.

Lecture material, especially for purposes of interpretation, has been drawn on heavily, to such an extent that footnote reference would be impossible. It is no more than just to point out the high quality of this source.

To Professor Edward A. Post, to Professor Thomas R. Mather, and to Mr. Roger Thomas the student gratefully acknowledges an exceptionally honest debt.

Library Numbers refer to Widener

American Literature vol. IV No. 3 November, 1932
see p. 351 for bibliography "1900-1932."

The American Spectator, A Literary Newspaper

This newspaper under the editorship of Nathan, Boyd, Dreiser, Cabell, and O'Neill has been published monthly since November, 1932. The student admits that he has read all the issues.

Anderson, Sherwood: The Modern Writer Gilber, Lilienthal San Francisco 1925

(not used)

Babbitt, Irving: The New Laokoon , 8th impression Houghton, Mifflin, Boston & New York. March 1929

A quotation used.

Babbitt, Irving: Rousseau and Romanticism, Houghton, Mifflin, Boston & New York. 1930 ed.

A quotation used.

Beach, Joseph Warren: Glass Mountain (Omit)

Apparently a novel, though in fact a life of Hemingway. (Not used.)

Beach, Joseph Warren: The Outlook for American Prose. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1926 AL39.26

Helpful.

Beach, Joseph Warren: The Twentieth Century Novel Century Co. N. Y. London, 1932

Helpful, up-to-date, but sketchy. Liberal toward the modernists.

Beer, Thomas: The Mauve Decade, American Life at the End of the Nineteenth Century A. A. Knopf, N. Y. 1926

Only a sentence used

Beer, Thomas: Stephen Crane A. A. Knopf, N. Y. 4th printing. October, 1926

One of Beer's few good books.

Beer, Thomas: "Toward Sunrise (1920-1930)" p. 536 Scribner's LXXXVII No. 5 (May, 1930)

Interesting

Bjorkman, Edwin: Voices of Tomorrow Mitchell Kennerley N. Y. & London, 1931

Good material on Robert Herrick, (Strindberg, etc.) Edith Wharton included for some unknown reason.

Boyd, Ernest, ed. Modern American Writers Series, Robt. McBride, N. Y.

I. James Branch Cabell by Carl Van Doren
II. Edith Wharton by Robert Morss Lovett
III. Theodore Dreiser by Burton Roscoe (not used.)
VII. Sherwood Anderson by Cleveland B. Chase
VIII. Willa Cather by René Rapin

Save for "II", a worthless series.

Boynton, Percy Holmes: More Contemporary Americans University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1927. AL129.27

All right.

Boynton, Percy Holmes: The Rediscovery of the Frontier University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1931. US5000.80

Not particularly helpful

Boynton, Percy Holmes: Some Contemporary Americans University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1924 AL129.24.5

(p. 19 notes contain good bibliography for modern poetry)

Helpful

Bregenzer, Don M. and S. Lovenson Round Table in Poictesme: A Symposium Colophon Club, Cleveland 1924, AL1011.025

Of ordinary interest

Brooks, Obed "The Literary Front" pp.52-54 The Modern Monthly vol. VII No. 1 (February, 1933)

A reasonable proletarian view.

Brooks, Van Wyck: see Addenda

Calverton, V. F. "Backward March: The Liberal Command" p. 27 The Modern Monthly vol VII, No. I (Feb. 1933)

Proletarian view of history.

Calverton, V. F. "Don't Blame the Puritans" Scribner's March, 1931

Excellent for middle-class morality thesis.

Cather, Willa:

For pretty complete bibliography up to 1930, see Willa Cather by René Rapin VIII in Modern American Writers

Cazamian, Louis: (Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise, Hachette, Paris, 1924)
(Emile Legouis, co-author)
A History of English Literature by Emile Legouis and Louis Cazamian. W. D. MacInnes, trans. of II J. M. Dent, London & Toronto, 1927

Vol. II used for occasional reference.

Cooper, F. T. Some American Story Tellers Henry Holt, N. Y., 1911

(old but fairly solid)

Courtney, W. L. The Feminine Note in Fiction Chapman & Hall, London, 1904 10466.23.11

Not too useful

Cranwell, John Phillips: see Addenda
Criticism in America; Its Function and Status Harcourt, Brace, N. Y. 1924

Excellent background for contemporary criticism.

Dreiser, Theodore "Art and America" The Seven Arts Feb. 1914

Dreiser

Dreiser, Theodore "What I Believe" p. 279 Forum LXXXII No. 5 (Nov. 1929)

Interesting for his later philosophy

Drew, Elizabeth A. The Modern Novel, Harcourt, Brace, N. Y. 1926 10466.23.160

Poor

Erskine, John Leading American Novelists N. Y. 1910 (AL279.10.9) Century Co.

Not used

Fitzgerald,F.Scott: "Echoes of the Jazz Age" p.459,
Scribner's: XC No.5 (Nov.1930) Quoted

Flaubert,Gustave: Madame Bovary Albert and Chas.Boni,
N.Y.1930.(in English,translator not given)

Good introduction by Dora K. Ranous

Foerster,Norman,ed: Humanism and America,Essays on
the Outlook of Modern Civilisation
Farrar and Rinehart ,N.Y.1930

Very helpful

Follett,Wilson: The Modern Novel
A.A.Knopf, N.Y.1923 Lit 940.22.2

Indifferent

Follett,Wilson: Some Modern Novelists
Henry Holt,N.Y.1918 1046.23.18

Chiefly Edith Wharton

Gale,Zona (see Addenda)

Garland,Hamlin: Crumbling Idols
Stone and Kimball Chicago and Cambridge,1894

Essential (see Addenda)

Goldberg,Isaac: The Man Mencken
Simon and Schuster N.Y.1925

Scant material on Dreiser and others.Poor

Gordon,George (pseud.): The Men Who Make Our Novels
(C.C.Baldwin) Moffat,Yard N.Y.1918

Worthless,save for chance quotation

Hansen,Harry: Mid-West Portraits: A Book of
Memories and Friendships.

Harcourt, Brace N.Y.1923 AL 1719.7.20

Primary Source

Hardy,Thomas: "Wessex Folk" stories in
Harper's: vols. 82,and 83

Harris,Frank : Contemporary Portraits
2nd.Series published by author at 57 Fifth Avenue, New York City.I9I9. Lit495.6.I0

Interesting contents, but only Dreiser pertains to thesis

Hazard,Lucy Locke: The Frontier in American Literature
Thomas Y. Crowell,N.Y.I927

Indifferent

Hazlitt,Henry: "America's Greatest Authors" , p.245,
Forum LXXXVIII,No.4 (October, I932)

Nothing

Hergesheimer,Joseph: in Saturday Evening Post
"Mohogany" vol. I95 No.53 (Jan.I923)
"Pewter" vol. I96 No.22 (Jan.I924)
"Oak" vol. I96 No. 3 (July,I923)

These articles show Hergesheimer's concern with "the stuffs" rather than "the stuff" of life. (p.38I, Parrington, op.cit.)

Herrick,Robert: "What Is Dirt ?" Bookman, November,I929
vol.70,pp. 258-262.

Excellent article

Houston,P.H. and R.M.Smith — Types of World Literature
Doubleday,Doran.Garden City,N.Y.I930

pp.839-922 ("Literary Criticism")

Holliday,Robert C. Booth Tarkington
Doubleday,Page N.Y. I9I8

The best that could be said of him.

Howells,William Dean: "The Novels of Herrick"
North American Review I89, 8I2

Not used

Joliet, L. Précis Illustré de la Littérature Française
Librairie Armand Colin,Paris, I924

Consulted for I9th. Cent. French Naturalists

Legouis,Emile: see Cazamian

Lewis, Lloyd and Henry Justin Smith — Chicago; The History of its Reputation
Harcourt,Brace N.Y.I929

US 26838.50 Bur.Munic. Res.0

Excellent for "Chicago School"

Lovett,Robert Morss — Preface to Fiction
T.S.Rockwell Chicago, I93I Lit 956.I2
(see Boyd,II)

Helpful

Macdonald,W.A. "The Repatriated Lewis" in Boston Transcript, March, 7th,I93I

Interesting

Manly,John Matthews and Edith Rickert — Contemporary American Literature: Bibliographies and Study Outlines

Harcourt,Brace N.Y.I922 AL I.II0

'Exhaustive and accurate'

Marble,Annie Russell: A Study of the Modern Novel
D.Appleton New York & London I928

Nothing

Matthews,T.S. "Christopher Morley" in New Republic p.I67 ff. vol.54 (March 2I,I928)

Valuable criticism

Mencken,H.L. "The American Novel" in Prejudices,Fourth Series
A.A.Knopf N.Y. I924 AL 2452.2.27

Worthless

Mencken,H.L. James Branch Cabell
Robt.McBride N.Y.I927

Pamphlet puff

Mencken,H.L."The National Letters" in Prejudices,Second Series
A.A.Knopf N.Y. I920 Lowell 566.5.2

Mencken again

Mencken,H.L. "Theodore Dreiser"in A Book of Prefaces
Garden City Pub.Co.,Garden City,N.Y.I9I7 (I924 ed.)

Excellent defensive essay

Michaud,Régis: (Le roman americain d'aujourd'hui.
Critique d'une civilisation.
Boirin & Cie. Paris I926)

The American Novel Today
Little,Brown Boston I928. Translated by the author.

Interesting understanding and misunderstanding from French point of view. Dreiser chap.noteworthy.

More,Paul Elmer: "The Modern Current in American Literature"
Forum Jan. I928

Interesting

Morris,Laurence S. "Upton Sinclair"
New Republic (March 7th, I928)p.90,vol.54

Good

Norris,Frank: The Responsibilities of the Novelist
Doubleday,Page N.Y. I903 (copyright, I90I)

Essential,and not over-emphasized,it is hoped.

Overton,Grant: American Nights Entertainment N.Y.I923
D.Appleton,Doubleday Page,Geo.H.Doran,
Chas. Scribner's Sons

List of publisher's sufficient comment

Overton,G. Cargoes for Crusoes N.Y.I924
D.Appleton, Geo.H.Doran, Little Brown

Puff

Overton,G. The Women Who Make Our Novels
Moffat,Yard N.y. I9I8

Except for Ellen Glasgow,Useless

Overton,G. When Winter Comes to Main Street
Geo.H.Doran N.Y. I922

Puff

Pattee,Fred Lewis : A History of American Literature Since I870
Century Co. N.Y.I925

Excellent preface to I900

Pattee,F.L. The New American Literature
Century Co. N.Y. I930 (Student's Edition)

Most Valuable Point of Departure for the Period.Student borrows greatly.

Parrington,V.L. Main Currents in American Thought vol.III, The Beginnings of Crit.Realism in America,I860-I920.
Harcourt,Brace N.Y. I93I 2nd. ed.

Despite Jeffersonian bias,a helpful synthesis.Contemporary material not all complete at author's death, but published in note form.

Rosenberg,Harold: "Note on Class Consciousness in Literature"
The New Act No.I (Jan.I933) p.3

Sympathetic and fairly reasonable

Sedgwick,Henry D. The New American Type
Riverside Press Cambridge, I908

Principally Edith Wharton and Anne Douglas Sedgwick, the latter a relation,judging from the text.

Sherman,Stuart Pratt: Critical Woodcuts
Chas.Scribner's Sons N.Y.I926
AL 3395.4.I52 Eng Tut Lib

Helpful

Sherman,S.P. Our Contemporary Literature
Henry Holt N.Y.I9I7 I0476.I0I

Especially "The Barbaric Naturalism of Theodore Dreiser"

Sherman,S.P. Points of View
Chas.Scribner's Sons N.Y.I924 AL 3395.4.I70

Sinclair Lewis material

Squire,J.C.ed., Contemporary American Authors
Henry Holt N.Y. I928 AL I29.28.5

English view well advanced

Shultz,Victor:"Henry Blake Fuller"
Bookman:pp.34-38,vol.70 (Sept.I929)

Worth reading

Stalnaker,John M. and Fred Eggau: " American Novelists Ranked: A Psychological Study "
The English Journal April,I929

Not used

Sullivan,Mark: America Finding Herself, vol. III of Our Times Chas.Scribner's N.Y.London,I927

Excellent for light social history and Rooseveltian era.

Tarkington,Booth: Looking Forward and Others
Doubleday,Page & Co. Garden City,N.Y.I926

"Inspiring Essays"

Thompson,Alan Reynolds: "The Cult of Cruelty"
Bookman: pp.477-487,LXXIV,No.5 (Jan.&Feb. I932)

Helpful

Walker,Franklin: Frank Norris
Doubleday,Doran Garden City,N.Y.I932

pp.78-I07("Naturalism"), I44-I72,2I8-308.
A first biography of Norris.

West, Rebecca: The Strange Necessity
Doubleday,Doran Garden City,N.Y. I928
23896.25.I0

Cather,Lewis,and Anderson somewhat obscured by West's modernism

Wharton,Edith: The Writing of Fiction
Scribner's,N.Y.I925

Important for author's view,of course.

Wharton,Edith: "The Great American Novel", Yale Review,July,'27

Interesting

Wheeler,H.L., compiler — Contemporary Novels and Novelists: A List of References to Biographical and Critical Material.

School of Mines and Metallurgy,Univ. of Missouri. Rolla,Missouri,I92I

Excellent for critical material to I920.

Whipple,T.K. Spokesmen: Modern Writers and American Life D.Appleton. London,N.Y.I928

Good on Theodore Dreiser

Wilson,Edmund: "Literary Class War" New Republic: p.3I9 ff.vol.LX No.909 (Wed.May 4,I932)

Good summary

Winsten,Archer: " A Defense of Willa Cather" Bookmam: pp.634-640,LXIV No.6 (March,I932)

Usual thing

Wolfe,Humbert: "The Limits of Obscenity" Saturday Review of Literature,May 7th.,I932

Chronologically interesting opinion

Wright,C.H.C. A History of French Literature Oxford University Press,N.Y.I925

Standard

Van Doren,Carl: see Boyd I

Van Doren,Carl: The American Novel MacMillan,N.Y.I929

Helpful after page I88

Van Doren,Carl: Contemporary American Novelists MacMillan,N.Y.I922 AL 279.22

Booth Tarkington and "Revolt from the Village" good

Van Doren, Carl and Mark: American and British Literature Since I990.Century Co.N.Y.&London ,I925

Necessarily inadaquate because of scope

Underwood,J.C. Literature and Insurgency Mitchell,Kennerley N.Y.I9I4 AL 279.I4

Mark Twain,Henry James, W.D.Howells,Norris,Phillips, S.E.White,Edith Wharton,Atherton,Chambers,& Churchill.

Addenda

Brooks,Van Wyck: Emerson and Others
E.P.Dutton N.Y.1927 AL I323.0I3.3

Only "The Novels of Upton Sinclair"

Cranwell,John Phillips & James P.Cover — Notes on Figures of Earth
Robt.McBride N.Y.1929

Helpful for all Cabell references

Garland,Hamlin: My Friendly Contemporaries
A Literary Log
MacMillan,N.Y.1932

Garland in the Howells reminiscent vein. Casual interest for Zona Gale, Dorothy Canfield and Tarkington. Just a good word for every-body.

* * *

Gale,Zona: Portage,Wisconsin and Other Essays
A.A.Knopf N.Y.1928

Chap.V:"The United States and the Artist"
Chap.VI: "Implications"
Chap.VIII: "The Novel and the Spirit"
Chap.IX: "The Novel of Tomorrow"

The above chapters are most important, although the entire book is the basis for any treatment of Gale. It is, furthermore, remarkably good.

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
1 1719 02551 0183